

MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

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Mocimboa da Praia town and port captured by insurgents

After several weeks of preparation and heavy fighting, insurgents Tuesday (11 Aug) re-captured not just the town of Mocimboa da Praia, but also the port. A key link to the Palma gas site, the port was recently rehabilitated and a new coastal shipping route opened.

Coastal shipping from Nacala and Pemba north to Mocimboa and Palma has only just started as the alternative to roads. The only main road from Pemba north to Palma is the N380 through Macomia and Mocimboa, which has been closed by repeated attacks. Only a circuitous and difficult route via Montepuez, Mueda and Nangade is open.

Since the 27 June - 1 July third insurgent occupation, the centre of Mocimboa has been abandoned and empty. Insurgents began to move into outer villages and the suburbs a week ago (5 Aug) and there was some heavy fighting. Both sides in the civil war are using anonymous websites to broadcast their claims. On 6 August <https://defesamoz.info/> said defence forces had repelled the attack. Insurgents use Islamic State to release claims, and it said on 7 August that insurgents had overrun two military bases and killed or injured 50 soldiers.

Helicopters from Dyck Advisory Services (DAG) provided some air support to government troops, but it was limited because they are still based in Pemba which means they have only 15 minutes over Mocimboa before having to return to Pemba to refuel, *Zitamar* (11 Aug) reports.

Power and communications was cut early, although Vodacom held out until Monday (10 Aug). Although the town was controlled the navy successfully defended that port until Tuesday when they ran out of ammunition and could not keep the insurgents at bay. (*Zitamar* 11 Aug) *Zitamar* also notes that DAG tried to deliver ammunition to the navy, but they dropped it so far from the fighting that a number of navy personnel were killed in efforts to retrieve it.

Finally, Defence Minister Jaime Neto held a televised press conference this afternoon (Thursday 13 Aug) to confirm the attack. In answer to a question, Neto said defence forces control Mocimboa and "at this time, the terrorists control nothing". Although "there still exist places where bandits are still hiding"

The written press statement Neto read out was more cautious. "The Defence and Security Forces are trying to control the situation, but it is still tense and fluid." Live transmission on TVM <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBhcV7OG66o> and text on <https://bit.ly/FDS-13Aug>

The statement had two other interesting points. First, it claimed that the ability of the insurgents to remain in the area despite heavy losses "means they had received additional reinforcement in equipment and men from bases outside the national territory." Second, it points to the danger that the insurgency could spread beyond Cabo Delgado, and that "the Mozambican state will take all additional measure necessary so that this model of destruction does not spread to other regions."

The insurgency does not threaten gas exploration in Cabo Delgado, President Filipe Nyusi assured World Bank President David Malpass, in a virtual meeting. (VOA 11 Aug)

Yesterday VOA (<https://bit.ly/VOA-12Aug>) said 55 members of the defence force were killed and 90 injured. Pinnacle News said Pemba hospitals were overwhelmed by the injured. Yesterday (12 Aug) the defence forces (FDS) issued a statement saying they had killed 59 insurgents in the past week, mainly in fighting in outlying villages. Pinnacle News reports today that 1500 newly graduated riot police (UIR, which does most of the fighting) have been sent to Cabo Delgado.

Secret debt boat hit? VOA and Nuno Rogerio both report a navy fast patrol boat off shore at Mocimboa harbour was hit by an RPG (Rocket-Propelled Grenade) fired by an insurgent on the shore, and probably sunk. Unconfirmed reports say it is one of the three HSI32 fast patrol boats bought from Privinvest as part of the \$2 bn secret debt. Kroll in its investigation of the \$2 bn secret debt said that there was huge over-invoicing on the ships. Their independent expert said that HSI 32 interceptors were worth \$8 mn each, but Mozambique was charged \$32.7 mn each.

There was substantial preparation for the attack, which may have involved hundreds of insurgents. During the past month there have been a series of raid on villages which seem aimed at building up supplies of food and medicines. There was also fighting around Awasse and Chai as insurgents successfully cut the road to Mocimboa. A 15 vehicle military convoy going from Meuda to Mocimboa was ambushed in Awasse on 10 August. There has also been fighting in Quissanga. (Intelyse, 12, 7 Aug) and Litamanda, Macomia district. (Cabo Ligado, 11 Aug)

Cabo Delgado's History of violence

The current civil war is often seen as something unusual, but Cabo Delgado has a history of violence. It was a centre of the slave trade, the liberation war began there and Cabo Delgado saw significant fighting, and we point to two important violent outbursts, in Mocimboa da Praia in 2005 and Montepuez in 2000. Earlier violence showed many similarities with the current insurgency.

Mocimboa's 2005 post-election riots set a pattern for the insurgency

At least 12 people were killed and 47 injured, with more than 128 homes burned, in clashes in Mocimboa da Praia on 6 September 2005. The riot was an important precursor of the current insurgency, underlining divisions and grievances.

Mocimboa has always been sharply divided, as elections show, with small differences between parties. (see below) In a 21 May 2005 by-election, the Frelimo candidate was elected mayor by 553 votes, but the margin was clearly due to fraud, as reported by observers at the time. There were daily protests by Renamo, including rallies outside the STAE office which were broken up by police. Demonstrations continued until the inauguration of the new mayor on 5 September, when Renamo inaugurated its candidate as rightful mayor. Early the next day, a large group headed into 30 de Junho neighbourhood, building barricades on the main road and looting and destroying residences of senior Frelimo figures.

The 30 de Junho neighbourhood exemplifies the sharp divisions of Mocimboa da Praia, according to a PhD thesis by Ana Santos. On one side of the main road is the older, dense community of the Mwani, the traditional residents of this area who are Muslim, linked to fishing and trading, and historically linked to the Swahili coast and Tanzania. In multi-party elections, they have backed Renamo. On the other side of the road are the Makondi, in a newer neighbourhood of houses built in straight rows. They are Catholic, from a farming background, and linked to the ruling party, Frelimo. Divisions were widening as Makondi areas began erecting big crosses, including a large Jubilee cross in 2000, which was seen as particularly provocative in a predominantly Muslim town.

Wealth is relative, but the Makondi are seen as richer, in part because so many have pensions for supposedly participating in the independence war, which are not seen as available to Mwani. The money is often first spent on corrugated roofing sheets, seen as a sign of wealth. Thus the crowd attacked the houses of the Frelimo leaders who were seen having unfair political and economic power, and as having stolen the election, They were seen as monopolising pensions and marginalising the Mwani, according to Ana Santos. One Frelimo official was burned to death in his house. Tensions were later exacerbated when it was Catholic agencies which helped those who had lost houses to rebuild even better homes.

But Santos makes a final point important to the current war. The former fighters are "Makondi of an older generation [which] creates resentment among those who can make no claim for benefits, e.g. the young and those who cannot claim to have taken part in the liberation struggle. ... Being able to say that one is Makonde and of a certain age brings with it strong privileges, and alienates ever growing sections of the population, namely the youth, creating more tension."

Santos' research helps to situate Mocimboa at the centre of the new war, and also explains both the role of marginalised youth, and the involvement of young Makondi is what is often billed as an Islamist insurgency. (2010 PhD thesis at St Antony's College University of Oxford:

<https://bit.ly/Mocimboa-2005>)

Elections in Mocimboa da Praia have always been close. In the 1999 presidential election Renamo head Afonso Dhlakama won 550 more votes than Frelimo's Joaquim Chissano. In 2004 Dhlakama won 50 more votes than Frelimo's candidate Armando Guebuza, but with suggestions of fraud, such as a polling station in the secondary school which voted by a 115 vote margin for Renamo in parliamentary elections and was excluded from the presidential count. In the 2003 municipal elections Frelimo's Cassimo Abdala beat Renamo's Saide Assane by 157 votes, again with hints of Frelimo misconduct. Abdala died on 15 October 2004. Frelimo delayed the by-election, which was highly criticised by the Constitutional Council. It should have been within 60 days of the death, but in fact was not held until 21 May 2005. Armadeu Pedro stood for Frelimo, and Assane for Renamo. This by-election was closely observed. Pedro was declared victor by 533 votes, but there was an outcry because indications of ballot box stuffing and spoiling of ballots for Assane (by adding an extra ink mark during the count) added up to the difference. In one polling station alone, more than 100 Assane votes had been invalidated in this way. Two Renamo appointees to STAE were arrested during the election. The National Elections Commission only approved the results on 24 May 2005 by an 11-8 vote, split on party lines. (Mozambique Political Process Bulletin 32 – 15 July 2005, AIM 29 June 2005 and September, Conselho Constitucional Acórdão no 3/CC/2--5 de 28 de Junho and others, and various results as published by CNE & STAE)

Montepuez 2000 - 92 dead - and other violence

Montepuez, Cabo Delgado, has not yet been affected by the current insurgency, but it is close enough to create worries, and there has been on-going violence. In January 2019 Gemfields agreed to pay \$8.3 mn to settle claims of torture, the killing of 18 people by mine security staff, and evictions of miners and farmers. In February this year, 800 to 1500 artisanal miners invaded the ruby mines. (This newsletter, 29 Jan 2019 & 19 Feb 2020) But the worst violence was in 2000, when at least 92 people were killed.

The 3-4 December 1999 national election was very close and there was clear misconduct. Renamo claimed it won, and there were protests. Montepuez was one of the places with fraud, with an unexplained difference in 3,256 between presidential and parliamentary votes. On 9 November 2000 Renamo held national demonstrations which were met by a strong police response, with at least 35 people killed. In Montepuez more than 500 demonstrators attacked the police post and took weapons, liberated prisoners from the jail, destroyed administration documents, and took the district administrator and prison director as hostages. The town was occupied for the day, and 17 people were killed, 7 police and 10 demonstrators.

A wave of arrests followed and 94 people were packed into a single cell of 7 metres by 3 metres (4 people per square metre) and 75 died of suffocation on 22 November. Autopsies showed they had not been fed for at least three days. (Metical 27 & 29 Nov 2000, AIM 25 Nov 2000, Mozambique Political Process Bulletin 28: <https://bit.ly/MPPB-28>)

Montepuez is particularly poor and in 2000 was suffering from the collapse of the cotton sector, as well as an influx of people trying to find work. The district also shows that religion and ethnicity are not the same. The district is overwhelmingly Macua, but is 61% Muslim.

Also in Cabo Delgado as part of the 9 November 2000 Renamo demonstrations, in Quissanga on the Cabo Delgado coast (a centre of the current war), Renamo attacked the residence of the district administrator. The police blocked their path, and opened fire, successfully defending the building. However Renamo did occupy the Quissanga administrative offices, which they held for several hours. Four people were injured in the Quissanga clashes.

In Balama, in the south of the province, where at least two polling stations had been excluded from the presidential contest without explanation, three people died in street fighting.

In Pemba, police opened fire to prevent the demonstrators reaching the provincial governor's residence. But demonstrators did beat the provincial director of the Electoral Administration Technical Secretariat (STAE), Assara Marques, whom they blamed for the fraud. (AIM 10 Nov 2000) More than 3000 presidential votes were "lost" in Pemba in 1999.

Ongoing violence and attacks on elites have been a feature of Cabo Delgado and the coastal zone for more than two decades, with a belief that elites want the poor dead. In Muidumbe, a focus of the current civil war, 24 people were lynched, accused of magically commanding lions who ate local people, or dressing in lion costumes to kill. This was an attack on the elite, said to be led by the district administrator who was a liberation war veteran. And in yet another precursor to the current war, the attacks were led by marginalised youth hanging around the Muidumbe market. (Paolo Israel article in 2009 *Journal of Southern African Studies*: <https://bit.ly/Muidumbe-lions>) Cholera riots were highlighted by Carlos Serra: <http://bit.ly/SerraCol> My February report also discusses historical violence <http://bit.ly/CDelgadoOrigins>

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

Important external links

Cabo Delgado civil war weekly report - Zitamar, MediaFax, ACLED - <http://bit.ly/CaboLigado>

Covid-19 daily updated data and graphs <https://covidmoz.netlify.app/>

Previous editions of this newsletter: bit.ly/MozNews2020

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

Other Mozambique material bit.ly/mozamb

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)

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

Mozambique media websites, Portuguese:

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/>

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