

# MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

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## US says create jobs to thwart insurgents

"Addressing the socioeconomic drivers of the threat, countering ISIS messaging, and providing greater economic opportunity and resilience of the community so that the attraction to violent extremism is lessened" is essential in Cabo Delgado, said Michael Gonzales, Deputy Assistance Secretary in the US Bureau of African Affairs in an 11 March press conference.

But at the press conference John T. Godfrey, Acting Special Envoy for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, said "we have to confront ISIS in Africa". That is the US priority. And he made clear the US sees the war in Cabo Delgado as ISIS "terrorist activities".

He also made clear some Trump administration offers of military training and equipment made at a meeting in Maputo 8 January were no longer on the table. The only proposed help is to "bolster the ability of the government to counter terrorist finance," John T. Godfrey, Acting Special Envoy for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, told the press conference.

Godfrey admitted that Amnesty's accusations of war crime by government forces do create a problem for any future training of Mozambican forces. "We have a very rigorous process under the Leahy Law [for] vetting of units with which we would seek to partner that requires that the individuals and leaders of those units with which we would partner have a clean record with respect to any human rights or law of armed conflict violations."

## US names ISIS-Mozambique and its 'leader' as global 'terrorists'

The US on 10 March designated Islamic State of Iraq and Syria – Mozambique (ISIS-Mozambique) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and the man it says is head of ISIS-Mozambique, Tanzanian Abu Yasir Hassan, as Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT).

At the 11 March press conference, John Godfrey was asked to provide evidence of ISIS links to the insurgency and that Abu Yasir Hassan is head, but he declined. He would only say that they had secret evidence. "I would say that the evidence of ties between the ISIS branch or network in

Mozambique and the so-called ISIS-Core in Iraq and Syria is quite incontrovertible" which is "why the threat is particularly concerning for us." He added that "we're quite confident" that Abu Yasir Hassan "really is the leader of ISIS."

A subsequent US statement said "Abu Yasir Hassan, also known as Yaseer Hassan and Abu Qasim, was born in Pwani Region, Tanzania, between 1981 and 1983. The United States Government has assessed with a high degree of confidence that Hassan is the leader of ISIS-Mozambique."

It is believed that Abu Yasir Hassan was one of the most influential leaders of Al-Shabaab (as it is called locally) in Cabo Delgado, but before the group turned into armed violence. He is one of the Tanzanian religious leaders who went to Cabo Delgado many years ago. He lived in Mocímboa da Praia until 2014/2015 and had links with radical groups in Congo. It is believed that he lived in Congo as well. But, despite US claims, it is unclear if he is a current leader of the group. Indeed, Inspector General of Police (IGP) in Tanzania, Simon Sirro, said on 12 March that their records showed Abu Yasir Hassan is dead. (*The Citizen*, Tanzania, 13 Mar)

Godfrey made other statements that raise questions about the recentness of his evidence, in particularly stressing "a nexus between terrorism finance and narcotics trafficking in Mozambique that's particularly problematic." But all indications are that this is a myth - the insurgency has closed roads and beaches making the landing and movement of heroin and crystal meth impractical. So drug shipments have moved south to Nampula province, particularly Angoche, and no drugs are moving through insurgent zones.

Analysts speaking to Zitamar (11 Mar) said Hassan "is understood to be one of a number of leaders of the Mozambican insurgency, and perhaps the leader of the Supreme Council of IS Mozambique - but remarked on the curiosity of the US designating just one person, and a Tanzanian at that, rather than any Mozambicans. That helps Mozambique's (and in particular President Nyusi's) narrative of the insurgency coming from outside the country, rather than having local roots. But prisoners that have escaped from insurgents' main base Siri, do refer to the commanders as Tanzanians. Meanwhile, the Islamist connection is something the regime has always tried to avoid, under pressure from Mozambique's influential Muslim community."

The US briefing transcript is on [https://www.state.gov/briefings/department-press-briefing-march-11-2021/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.state.gov/briefings/department-press-briefing-march-11-2021/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).

## Designation not helpful

The designation of ISIS-Mozambique as an FTO "risks impeding humanitarian efforts and hobbling potential disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) activities," according to the US-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) on 12 March. In particular, the designation creates problems "by restricting the ability of humanitarian aid organizations to engage in essential dialogue with armed groups to receive security assurances" and restrict US support for humanitarian aid and DDR. Experience in Yemen, Nigeria and elsewhere shows "it is challenging to engage in most forms of communication or engagement with a listed FTO, even as part of peace processes or DDR programs." <https://www.csis.org/analysis/mozambique-problem-foreign-terrorist-organization-fto-designations>

The designations prevent travel to the US, freeze US-related assets, ban US people from doing business with them, and make it a crime to provide support or resources to the movements.

"This designation could complicate the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Cabo Delgado, and possible dialogue with insurgents there," Dino Mahtani, deputy director of the Africa program at the International Crisis Group, told the [New York Times](#).

CSIS warns that the Mozambique government "may view the designation as an affirmation of its narrative of an externally fomented conflict and may use it to validate the government's emphasis on a military response to the insurgency. Mozambican officials last year started to stress the conflict's external dimension, presumably seeking to deflect any blame for the region's disaffection and mismanaging of the security response. A continued focus on a military campaign at the expense of social and economic programs to foster greater development and stability will likely prolong the conflict."

"The government's heavy-handed approach to the conflict exacerbated these pre-existing tensions, further fuelling recruitment for the insurgency. ASWJ [al-Shabaab] leaders have been modest in their use of media to broadcast their message, but in the few instances of published videos or meetings with local communities, they regularly condemn the central government for its mistreatment of the poor, particularly Muslims," says CSIS. "ASWJ most likely makes its own operational and strategic decisions and does not act on orders from the Islamic State's core".

**Islamist rebels in the DRC were also labelled** as an FTO linked to ISIS, in the same 10 March announcement of the Mozambique designation. The US says the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) are Islamic State of Iraq and Syria – Democratic Republic of the Congo (ISIS-DRC). However a June 2020 report from the UN Security Council's Group of Experts on DRC ([S/2020/482](#)) found no direct evidence of substantial links between ADF and ISIS. And a [Washington Post \(30 Sept 2020\) analysis](#) warned that the claim of Islamic links "may be limiting government and UN protection efforts."

## **US 'Green Berets' training Mozambican marines**

US Special Forces soldiers began training Mozambican marines this week, Colonel Richard Schmidt, the Deputy Commander of US Special Operations Command Africa (SOCAFRICA), announced in Maputo Monday (15 Mar). With just a dozen Army Green Berets, the "program is modest in size and scope" notes the *New York Times* (15 May). "But it signals the entry of the United States military into a counterinsurgency effort that has been aided so far mainly by South African mercenaries, who have faced accusations of human rights abuses."

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/15/world/africa/mozambique-american-troops-isis-insurgency.html>

"A senior State Department official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters, said the military training program, which will focus on basic soldiering skills, could lead to more ambitious American help for Mozambique's military including combat casualty care, planning and logistics. The United States is also looking to step up intelligence assistance for Mozambique, the official said," the *Times* reported.

The *Times* also notes that "the insurgency in Mozambique includes some fighters from Tanzania, but most come from the local area, a place of deep poverty and endemic corruption. The main Islamic State publications have not mentioned operations in Mozambique since last fall."

Portugal is also anxious to send troops, and Defence Minister João Gomes Cravinho said last month that Portugal hopes to send 60 members of its special forces to train Mozambican marines and commandos.

## **Research papers**

### **New details on roots of civil war**

IESE last week published two readable and well researched new reports on the roots of war in Cabo Delgado.

**The insurgency's roots spread into Nampula and Niassa, write Salvador Forquilha and João Pereira** in a paper published by IESE on 11 March. They point to "the social, economic and political conditions favourable to the emergence and expansion of the insurgency, namely, the feeling of ethnic, social, economic and political exclusion. Exploited and mobilized by the insurgents, these conditions permitted the construction of an anti-state narrative, which acted as a catalyst for the adherence of young people to the group, through a complex recruitment mechanism that extended" into Niassa and coastal Nampula. This also meant it was not an "ethnic war".

"The state's inappropriate response, at least at the beginning of the insurgency, with mass arrests, the closure of mosques and human rights violations ... helped to reinforce the schism in its relations with local populations and to feed the anti-state narrative."

"In the case of Nampula and Niassa, ... Al-Shabaab exploits local social, economic, political and religious dynamics for recruitment purposes, focusing on various aspects: local religious divisions within Islam; ethnic divisions; instrumentalisation of the anti-state/Frelimo narrative; microcredit schemes to boost small businesses for future recruits; promises of employment in the Cabo Delgado fishing sector ... and in mining and other activities. ... In many cases, the incentives for recruits are based essentially on ... high wages, which are believed to exist in Cabo Delgado, and the possibility of better living conditions. ... The recruitment process focuses mainly on young people, especially those living in very vulnerable conditions, with no jobs or prospects, particularly in the coastal districts of Nampula."

One reason the insurgents did not become established in Niassa and Nampula, they argue, was better coordination between government authorities and local Muslim leaders. Divisions within Frelimo about the war and within Cabo Delgado limited the government's response in that province.

**"After all, it is not just Cabo Delgado!** Insurgency dynamics in Nampula and Niassa," by Salvador Forquilha and João Pereira, published by IESE Instituto de Estudo Sociais e Económicos (IESE). In Portuguese <https://www.iese.ac.mz/ideias-no-138-sf-jp/> and in English <https://www.iese.ac.mz/ideias-n-138e-sf-jp/>

**The insurgents "build on a religious sect which emerged in 2007.** By definition, sects withdraw from society and this was the case in Cabo Delgado as al-Shabaab leaders and members built their own mosques and distanced themselves from state institutions and the wider society. The sect was Islamist, thus aiming to establish a counter-society ruled exclusively according to Islamic law (sharia). The sect had nothing to do with the Sufi Muslim majority of Cabo Delgado or the Wahhabi Islamic Council of Mozambique (CISLAMO), who opposed the sect from the start," writes Eric Morier-Genoud, in the best and most detailed look at the religious roots of the insurgency."

Mainstream Muslim leaders "lobbied the state to repress the sect from the very start." Violence increased in 2015-6 with members of the al-Shabaab sect arrested and shot by police. As they believed they would not be allowed to withdraw from society, in 2016 they shifted to an armed struggle against the state in order to change society. But Morier-Genoud stresses that "the insurgency builds on a Mozambican religious sect whose leadership as primarily Mozambican."

There are also doctrinal differences. There were already tensions between the traditional Sufi Muslims who are the majority, and the more recently arrived and Frelimo-aligned Wahhabi Islamic Council of Mozambique (CISLAMO). Al-Shabaab are Quranists who only recognise the Quran and not the Hadiths, which leads to tensions with the Sufi Muslims. Doctrinally al-Shabaab is closer to the Wahhabi CISLAMO, but they disagree totally on what relation Muslims should have with the state, which led to early CISLAMO opposition. Meanwhile, al-Shabaab affiliated to ISIS in 2019 and ISIS claimed many of its attacks and victories. But those claims stopped nine months ago, and Morier-Genoud wonders about divergences: al-Shabaab are Quranists while ISIS is not, race and nationalism may play a part as ISIS is primarily Arab, and there may be disputes over power and control over strategy.

**"The jihadi insurgency in Mozambique: origins, nature and beginning"** by Eric Morier-Genoud is available in Portuguese free from IESE: <https://www.iese.ac.mz/cadernos-iese-no-21-emg/>. In English it is published in *Journal of Eastern African Studies* (14:3) on <https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2020.1789271> but this is available free only to academics. Knowledge is commodified, and for people not at a university, it will cost \$50 to read in English.

## ***Other Cabo Delgado News***

**Rumours the DAG contract will not be renewed** at the end of March, and that Mozambique's own air force will try to provide the needed air support. After the revelation that DAG operatives were dropping Syria-style barrel bombs from helicopters, it would be hard to renew the contract. In any case, DAG had been contracted by the Interior Ministry, while Defence is now in charge of the war and it will want to show its air force can provide adequate air cover.

**"Hungry, angry and fleeing** the horrors of war in northern Mozambique" is a good BBC report and video by Andrew Harding <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-56373651>

**Food deliveries and shortages in Palma** are the subject of a TVM video from 9 March, showing the delivery of food from the ship Amani (mentioned in newsletter 527, 1 Mar) and interviews with people complaining the prices of food and fuel remain very high. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e709K7Drk5Q&feature=emb\\_imp\\_woyt](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e709K7Drk5Q&feature=emb_imp_woyt)

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

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## ***Important external links***

**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 reports** - <http://bit.ly/Moz-flood21>

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

**Cabo Ligado** weekly report on civil war <http://bit.ly/CaboLigado>

Previous editions of this newsletter: <http://bit.ly/MozNews2021> and [bit.ly/MozNews2020](http://bit.ly/MozNews2020)

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

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

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## ***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](http://bit.ly/MozGasEng)

Gás\_para\_desenvolvimento\_ou\_apenas\_dinheiro?\_2015 [bit.ly/MozGasPt](http://bit.ly/MozGasPt)



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## Background reading

### Special reports

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

Special report on four poverty surveys: [bit.ly/MozPoverty](http://bit.ly/MozPoverty)

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>

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](http://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>

**Nine 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)

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)

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### 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](http://www.jornalnoticias.co.mz)

O País: [www.opais.co.mz](http://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)

Fórum de Monitoria do Orçamento - FMO (the main group following the \$2 bn secret debt - now run by CDD) <http://www.fmo.org.mz>

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