

MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

538 18 April 2021 Editor: Joseph Hanlon (j.hanlon@open.ac.uk)

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Catholic bishops blame war on 'certain groups taking over the nation and its resources'

"Behind this conflict there are interests of ... certain groups taking over the nation and its resources. Instead of being put at the service of local communities and becoming a source of sustenance and development, these resources are taken away with a total lack of transparency, fuelling revolt and resentment, especially in the hearts of the young," declared the Catholic bishops in a very strong 16 April statement. <https://bit.ly/Moz-Bishop-1>

"It is urgent to create more jobs and development opportunities for all, particularly for young people, and to this end, to apply locally the gains from the natural resources available," they say.

"We recognise that one of the main reasons why our young people have allowed themselves to be enticed to join the insurgency [is that] there is no opportunity to build a dignified life. They feel that society and decision-makers ignore their suffering and do not listen to their voices. It is easy to lure people who are full of life and dreams, but without prospects and who feel like victims of a culture of corruption."

"Nothing justifies violence", say the bishops. But they ask: "How can young people have perspectives if their own country seems to lack direction and a common project, in which they are invited to be active collaborators, and which nourishes their hope?"

Bishop Lisboa: Government threatened to kill me

Who threatened to kill you, Raffaella Scuderi of *La Repubblica* (11 April) asked Bishop Lisboa, recently forced to leave his post as Bishop of Pemba. "The government," he replied. "I first received threats of expulsion, then seizure of documents and in the end death.

"Maputo denied the war from the beginning. When the conflict and the danger became evident, it forbade talking about it. It prevented journalists from doing their work. One reporter has been missing since April last year. He worked for a community radio station and spoke about the war, said Bishop Lisboa.

"The Church was the only one talking about the situation. And that did not please the government. Above all, it did not tolerate news about the state. National pride, business. When a year ago the Bishops' Conference condemned what was happening in a document, the authorities reacted badly, beginning to throw mud at me."

"On 18 December I met Pope Francis at the Vatican," Lisboa continued. "He evidently had more information than I did. He knew I was taking risks and offered me a transfer to Brazil."

"Mozambique is one of the 10 poorest countries in the world. And the Northern region is the poorest. Last year I witnessed a reversal of public policy, no longer concerned with the population: health, education. Poor people, without work, ill and illiterate. Young people have no future because they cannot study: there is no secondary school. A poor and abandoned province, although rich. The ideal situation for war: poverty, many resources and ethnic issues. All the important elements for a conflict," the Bishop said. "This is an economic war for the appropriation of natural resources: gas, gold, rubies, semi-precious stones."

The interview has been translated into Portuguese by the Brazilian university Unisinos on <http://bit.ly/Moz-Lisboa-threat>. The original in Italian, is in *la Repubblica* behind a paywall on https://www.repubblica.it/esteri/2021/04/10/news/mozambico_vescovo_ribelli_papa_francesco-295898052/

No IS control, says *Cabo Ligado*

"In short, there is no evidence from the Palma attack that IS controls the strategic direction of the insurgency," report *Cabo Ligado* in its March monthly, published 15 April. The attack on Palma demonstrated that the insurgency's tactical skills are improving, perhaps with IS help, but did not represent any strategic shift toward the interests of IS central.

<https://www.caboligado.com/monthly-reports/cabo-ligado-monthly-march-2021>

Since November, IS had not been claiming attacks by Mozambican insurgents. But the IS claim of the Palma attack, in a fake news statement using old film from Mocimboa da Praia, made global headlines and boosted the IS profile.

"Even with the group's limited capacity to influence events in Mozambique, emphasizing the connections that do exist between IS and the Cabo Delgado insurgency remains a high priority for IS propagandists. Doing so extends the perceived reach of IS and bolsters its claim to be the connective tissue between local Islamist militancy and a global struggle against 'Crusader' states," notes Cabo Ligado.

In March the United States declared that the insurgents are a wing of IS (Islamic State). Most Mozambican researchers contest that. *Cabo Ligado* warns that "if the anti-insurgent coalition treats the insurgency as primarily a front in a global war against IS, it will strengthen the IS argument that the group gives meaning to local struggles in Mozambique and around the world."

Cabo Ligado cites a 1 April Hudson Institute [report](#) which argues that IS is trying to create a global brand. IS defers to local expertise and aspirations among its affiliates and does not attempt to control local groups. Instead, IS offers expertise and resources to insurgencies in exchange for local groups promoting the idea of IS as a global organization.

Cabo Ligado is a weekly and monthly detailed report on the war published by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), Zitamar News, and Mediafax. It is undoubtedly the best report on the war, and the March report, just out, summarises key issues very well. As well as the IS debate, it looks at tensions between displaced people and host communities and food distribution problems. It also looks in detail at the role of Dyck Advisory Group. The March issue is

on <https://www.cabologado.com/monthly-reports/cabo-ligado-monthly-march-2021> The weekly *Cabo Legado* is now available in Portuguese.

"Mozambique Palma attack: Why IS involvement is exaggerated" BBC (17 Apr) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-56773012> "The government appears happier to blame IS rather than its own policy failings for the continued conflict. But increasing numbers of Mozambicans are saying that creating thousands of jobs would end the war sooner and cost much less than a huge international military involvement."

Total 'terminates' Afungi contracts, confirming no early plans to return

Total 'terminated' most of its agreements with contractors on 14 April. The key word here is "terminate", and not suspend or delay. This suggests Total is not coming back soon.

One of the terminated contracts is for the "Afungi Camp Expansion", which appears to relate to the building of 9500 person construction camp. (see map) Terminating and not simply suspending that contract means that Total thinks it will be a long time - if at all - before it will need construction workers.



Economic Justice Atlas

The contract terminations will have a huge impact. The main contractor for the camp expansion is CMC, the Italian Cooperative of Masons and Cement Workers of Ravenna. CMC began operating in Mozambique in 1982 on Italian aid contracts, and is now the largest civil contractor in Mozambique.

Comment: Huge costs and less profit for Mozambique

Total is clearly not returning soon. Total had planned to start shipping liquefied natural gas (LNG) in 2024; unofficially, this had slipped to 2025. Even a one year delay means first LNG shipments will be 2026 or 2027. This has both contract and cost implications. When these projects were first developed in 2010-5, it was assumed that gas would come on line in 2019 and be sold for 30 years - to 2050.

Gas is a fossil fuel and coming under increasing pressure due to the climate crisis. The window is closing and major gas sales after 2045 seem unlikely. Total's project went ahead because it has contracts for 11 millions tonnes per year of LNG, ranging from 13 to 20 years, starting 2024. Some of these contracts were signed before climate crisis campaigners started fingering gas. There are eight different contracts, including Shell, Tokyo Gas and one of the owners of the project. So the hope is that some will accept the delay. But it seems likely some will want to renegotiate their

contract, paying less and opting for shorter contracts. (Fitch has the full list of contracts, on <http://bit.ly/Moz-Fitch-LNG>)

And if Total does come back, it will want to renegotiate its contract with the Mozambique government. Mozambique will have to pay what seem likely to be huge security costs and the costs of the delay. This will sharply reduce the government's revenue, especially for the next decade. The problem is further compounded because it seems unlikely that ExxonMobil will go ahead with its repeatedly delayed part of the project.

Banks, the gas industry, and Mozambique leaders whistle in the dark and desperately hope that governments do not agree to meet the 1.5 degree climate crisis target and that all the gas will still be sold.

But as the gas window closes on climate change grounds and the costs rise due to the insurgency, the likely income for the Mozambique government and the Frelimo elite gets smaller and recedes further into the future. The insurgents did not need to attack Afungi to burst an already deflating gas bubble. *jh*

Other war news

Palma bank robbery not insurgents. There are continued reports of the defence forces (FDS) sacking Palma after the insurgents left. In at least one bank, the ATMs were intact when the insurgents had left and the FDS took over, and were shown by TVM to have been broken open later. Residents are returning to Palma, but only very slowly. There are major problems caused by a lack of cash due to the banks being attacked, and lack of goods due to army looting. Boats are still carrying people from Palma to Pemba, but soldiers demand a fee to allow people onto the boat, and some people do not have enough money.

Mozambique "is not yet ripe for a peacekeeping operation" by the UN, according to Hanna Tetteh, special representative of the UN Secretary-General António Guterres to the African Union (AU) and the head of the United Nations Office to the African Union, said at a Center for Strategic and International Studies conference 14 April. "There is still the opportunity to be able to use political processes to try and get people to come back from the brink and to address some of the root causes of the conflicts, because a purely military response might not be the most effective response." https://clubofmozambique.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/210415_Development_Peacekeeping_Africa.pdf

Panic in Mueda: People in Mueda phoned family to say they were under attack on Thursday 16 April, but it proved an entirely a false alarm. The level of tension in Cabo Delgado remains very high, and Mueda could be the next insurgent target. It is not clear what happened in Mueda, but in various other cases frightened soldiers shoot wildly at shadows, and local people fear an attack. The general nervousness was shown by an incident on 10 April when a United Nations vehicle was fired at by members of the FDS after driving through a military checkpoint near Chuiba beach.

Armed local militias are playing an increasingly important role in the government's response to insurgents. On 8 April insurgents entered the village of Novo Cabo Delgado, in northwestern Macomia district near the Muidumbe district border. Finding it deserted, they looted food and other goods. As they left, they were ambushed by members of a local militia. Militia members killed three insurgents. One militia member was killed. Militia members identified two of the dead insurgents as being locals from Miangalewa, a village in Muidumbe district 10 km to the north. (*Cabo Ligado* 5-11 Apr) Insurgents attacked a barracks of an Antigo Combatentes (liberation war fighters) militia close to Pundanhar 15 Apr. (Intelyse).

1,110 companies have closed due to the war in Cabo Delgado, the president of the Confederation of Economic Associations (CTA) told Lusa (15 Apr). Losses exceed \$200 mn.

Islamic Council of Mozambique (Cislamo) head Aminudin Muhammad called for “close monitoring of the proliferation of mosques” and Islamic associations created without the knowledge of the authorities, warning of the “infiltration” of the country by preachers who spread radicalism. This is important, he argued, in order to prevent the use of Islam by “strange people” who promote a “bad indoctrination of young people” as is happening in Cabo Delgado, where he said that the “authors of violence use Islam to create chaos”. (Lusa 16 Apr) The Frelimo aligned Cislamo had opposed the setting up of fundamentalist mosques in 2015-6, leading to attacks on the new mosques both by police and traditional mosques. These attacks triggered the response leading to the attack on Mocimboa da Praia in 2017. This raises a basic question of whether or not the state should regulate religious sects - Christian, Muslim, or other - which challenge established religious groups.

Other news

Kidnappings, allegedly facilitated by the police, have increased. The kidnappings are of business people, often of Asian origin, for ransom. On 15 April four armed men kidnapped a businessman's son at a restaurant in Quelimane. The masked gunmen also took other customers' phones before they left with the victim. On 13 April the wife of the owner of Plaza Hotel in Mpauto was kidnapped in front of the Portuguese Consulate. On 11 April a businessman was kidnapped on Romao Fernandes Farinha Avenue in Maputo City. His wife was injured in the incident. Also on 11 April, a coal mine employee and casino owner were kidnapped in Benga, near Moatize, Tete.

Covid-19 continues low. There were 174 new cases last week, compared to 173 the week before, the lowest level since August. There were 8 deaths last week, the same as the week before, the lowest since December. But there were two notable Covid-19 related deaths last week. Singer Hortêncio Langa died age 70. Former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (2008-17) Oldemiro Balói died age 66.

The flood season is officially over and the National Disaster Risk Institute is stopping publication of its daily flood bulletin. We have been posting these detailed daily bulletins on <http://bit.ly/Moz-flood21>. But recent rains have weakened roads, which is still causing trouble. A section on the heavily travelled main E12 road into Nacala has collapsed (see photo). The 43 km diversion is over a bad road. In Tete a lorry overloaded with timber caused the collapse the road on the R322 between Madamba Village and the Chire River. This road is used by lorries going from Tete to Nacala bypassing Malawi.



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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

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

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

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)

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).
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