

REPORT

CONFLICT IN CABO DELGADO: FROM THE FRYING PAN INTO THE FIRE?

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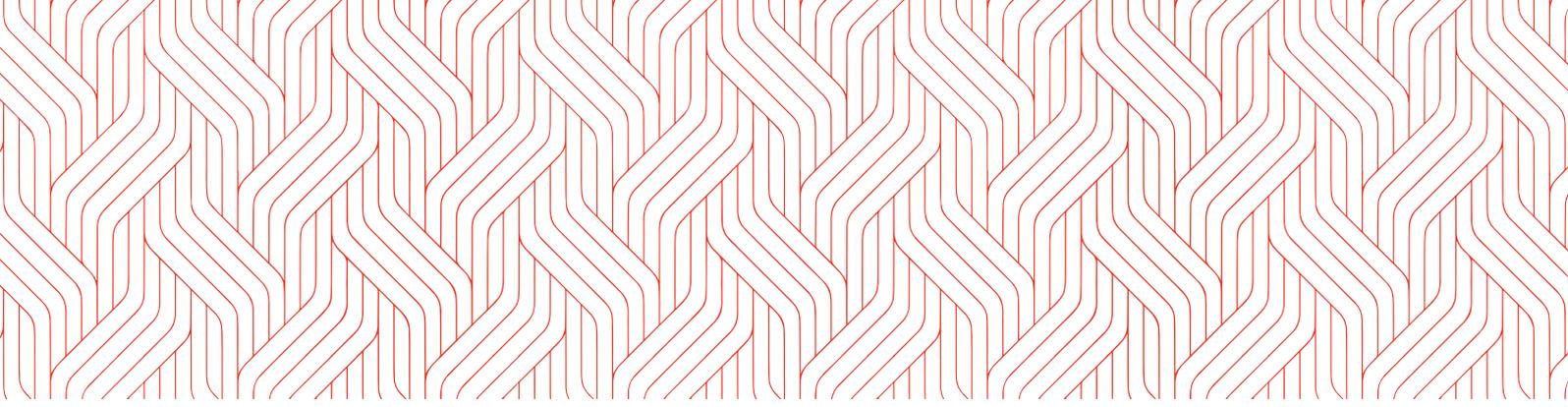
INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of the Islamist insurgency that has been unfolding in Mozambique's northern province of Cabo Delgado since October 2017. It is intended to promote discussion about the challenges and options in play to address immediate security concerns, as well as longer term development and human security challenges. The insurgency is at a crucial juncture and presents an accelerating security and humanitarian challenge, whilst the government desperately tries to work out a response strategy that has the backing of political and security actors.

Much remains unknown about this insurgency, its antecedents, its evolution, detail on who the insurgents really are, their structure, leadership, the role and intentions of external actors and how conflict dynamics have played out and informed these factors. Large swathes of affected districts remain no-go areas; detail of what happened in these affected areas have on the most part not been collected. A recent Amnesty International report has pieced together IDP testimonies to provide a partial insight into insurgent attacks in Macomia, Quissanga and Mocimboa da Praia.¹ The insurgents have not articulated a coherent or consistent message of intent, beyond the rejection of the State and its institutions and demands for the introduction of some version of Sharia law. The group, often referred to as Ahlu Sunnah wal Jammah, but most commonly known as "Al Shabaab" ("The Boys"), not to be confused with the group with the same name operating in Somalia, have a stated affiliation to Islamic State; available evidence, however, suggests it remains tentative at this stage, and the character and import of their relationship, in terms of the insurgency to date, remains contested.

Sectarian tensions were in play across the province for almost a decade before morphing into violent confrontation in October 2017, when men from a group known locally as 'Al-Shabaab' confronted local police over the arrest of sect members and briefly took over the port town of Mocimboa da Praia. The routing of government forces by hundreds of well-armed insurgents in the same locale in August 2020 and their continuing occupation, continues to expose the profound weakness of government security forces, who to date have struggled to put in place a counter-insurgency strategy fit for purpose. This presents a major threat to the massive investments in Cabo Delgado's Liquid and Natural Gas (LNG) projects, which are posited as the primary catalyst for Mozambique's economic development. A security agreement signed in August 2020 between the government and Total, the French oil major, has not prevented attacks creeping closer to the LNG site. Despite the presence of a dedicated Joint Task Force (JTF) of Mozambican police and military, in early January 2021, Total evacuated 500 staff in the face of encroaching insurgent threats.² A new security plan is being hammered out that must shore up faltering investor nerves if this US\$60 billion investment is to avoid being dangerously compromised.³

For over two years, Mozambican authorities dismissed the insurgency as the work of bandits and criminals, but in early 2020 acknowledged it faces an Islamist threat.⁴ But the government now emphasises the nature of that threat is external, downplaying the conflict's local roots and drivers. An array of political, social and economic factors are in play, ranging from religious, political and ethnic dynamics to an insubstantial state presence, social economic exclusion, especially amongst the youth (reflected in widespread poverty and unemployment) and flourishing illicit economies. At the same time, the government and its security forces have



maintained a largely victorious narrative, which avoids serious scrutiny of actual developments on the ground; it largely refutes or ignores repeated allegations of human rights violations by its security forces.⁵ Whilst claiming it wants the world to know what is going on in Cabo Delgado, and publicly calling for journalists to go and see for themselves what is going on, the government have yet to put in place a coherent and consistent media strategy to present its version of events. Unsurprisingly, this has compounded the challenge of distilling fact from fiction in a sea of speculation and competing narratives.

Mozambique has failed to bring the security situation under control, highlighting concerns about the capacity and competency of its security forces and the related challenges of developing a unified command structure and counter-insurgency strategy that is fit for purpose. Its contracting of Private Military Contractors (PMCs) in 2019 and 2020 shows it needs help on the security front; it reluctantly acknowledges this, but prefers to explore bilateral options for support and has repeatedly rejected calls for and offers of foreign boots on the ground. Over the last 16 months Maputo has undertaken on several occasions to enhance security cooperation with its northern neighbour Tanzania; this includes the signing of a new memorandum of understanding between respective police command structures, following a series of armed incursions by insurgents in late 2020 and a recent bilateral visit by President Nyusi to his late counterpart, President Magufuli.⁶

Mozambique has been and remains reluctant to work with the regions' peace and security architecture, only reaching out to the South African Development Community (SADC) in May 2020 after being prompted to do so and promising to submit a plan of action that the regional body can consider. Ten months later, it has still not done so, much to the frustration of regional players. A dedicated SADC summit set for 17 January 2021 has been postponed until an undetermined date possibly in May or June, ostensibly due to COVID-19 concerns.⁷ SADC has its own constraints, and whilst some member states, such as South Africa, Angola or even Zimbabwe may be able to provide bespoke assistance, prospects of a SADC deployment akin to the Forced Intervention Brigade in the Democratic Republic of Congo remain remote.

The insurgency's antecedents and evolution has coincided with the development of major gas finds off the Cabo Delgado coast; these are posited as a game changer for Mozambique's economy and future development and the largest current investment portfolio on the continent. Inevitably, this has

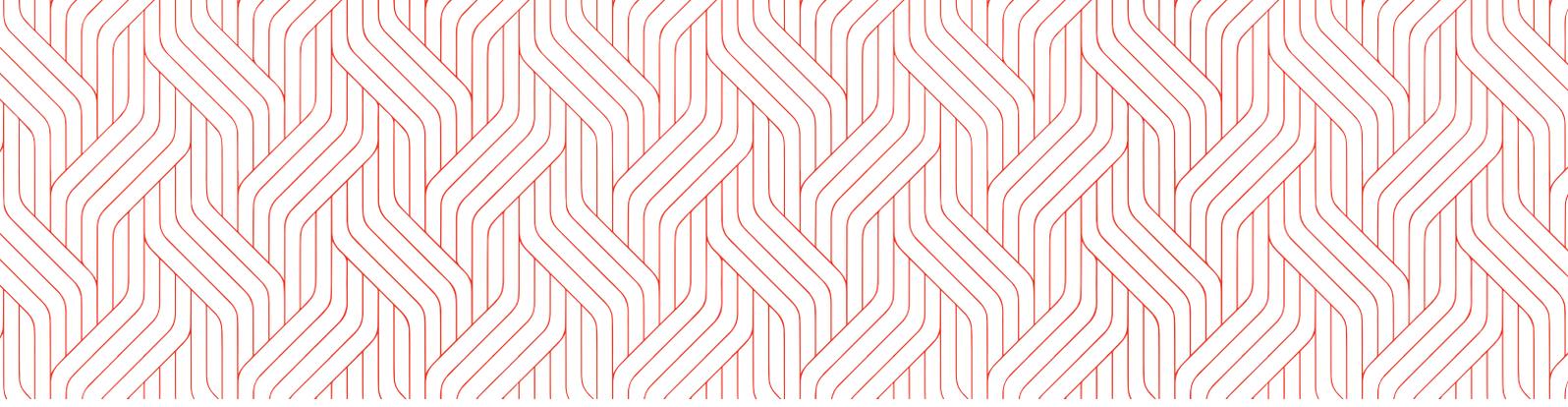
raised questions as to how this might be connected. A number of conspiracy theories about externally driven destabilisation agendas are in play, but with little empirical foundation; to date, the LNG site has not been a direct target of insurgents, who have also provided no specific commentary about the investment. The government is understandably keen to protect the major LNG investments located in Cabo Delgado, entering into an updated security cooperation agreement in late July 2020 with the French multinational, Total. Details of the agreement remain secret, but there are concerns that that security arrangements may entrench an "Iraqification" (i.e. two-track) approach to security that ironclads the LNG projects and related security corridors, militating against a broader security strategy to counter and prevent violent extremism.⁸ The launch of the government's Agency for Integrated Development in the North (ADIN) in late August is a tacit acknowledgment of development shortfalls in a region; it presents an opportunity for the government to connect and incorporate economic and social issues relating to the conflict into a longer term strategy that should include efforts to address social, economic and political faultlines. There is also an opportunity to draw from comparative learnings around deradicalization tactics, exploring dialogue options and investing in and rebuilding social capital, especially within local community-based leadership. Analyst and academics highlight the importance of investing further in research to better understand prevailing conditions and how best to address them.

UPDATE NOTE

Since the drafting of this report, several significant developments set out below have resulted in a deterioration in the security and humanitarian situation. This note is intended to bring readers up to date.

On 24 March, insurgents operating in the far north of Cabo Delgado launched a major attack on the district capital of Palma, killing dozens of people including some foreign contractors and forcing tens of thousands to flee. The government retook the town after a week of fighting but has not been able to re-establish adequate security. A month later, insurgents were still active in the town and environs, forcing remaining residents to leave. It is still not known how many were killed and injured in the attack.

This attack was accompanied by a major looting spree, some of which has been blamed on government security forces. The attack took place towards the end of the rainy season and



after several months in which there had been a general lull in fighting and no major offensives. The attack also resulted in a claim of responsibility by Islamic State, the first since late October 2020. In early March, the United States designated “IS – Mozambique” as a terrorist organization and named a Tanzanian national, Abu Yasir Hassen as the group’s leader. Whilst many had predicted a major insurgent offensive was in the works, the attack caught government security forces off guard. It also occurred on the same day Total had announced a resumption of full operations at its Afungi LNG site, ostensibly because the security concerns that had prompted their partial withdrawal in January had been addressed. Evidently, they had not been.

On 2 April, in the wake of the attack, Total announced that it was suspending operations at Afungi and evacuated its entire staff, handing back full responsibility for securing the site to the Mozambican government. On 14 April, they announced the termination with contractors and on 26 April declared a “force majeure” on its Mozambican operations. They will not return to Cabo Delgado until the security situation is addressed to their satisfaction; a resumption of operations is not expected within the next six to twelve months. The economic impact is a devastating blow to the Nyusi administration, which has since made several undertakings to assuage Total’s security concerns. This in turn has raised concerns that an essentially militarised response is in the offing. How this might unfold, however, remains unclear.

A heightened sense of insecurity in Cabo Delgado has been in evidence in the weeks following the Palma attack with concerns that insurgents may target the major towns in the province, including the capital Pemba. Smaller attacks have continued in several districts, especially along the coastline south of Palma, and there are expectations that the situation will continue to deteriorate. Rumors that insurgents are heading south towards Pemba and westwards towards Mueda illustrate the limited intelligence that is in play that can help the authorities to plan more effectively. This is compounded by ongoing weaknesses with government communications.

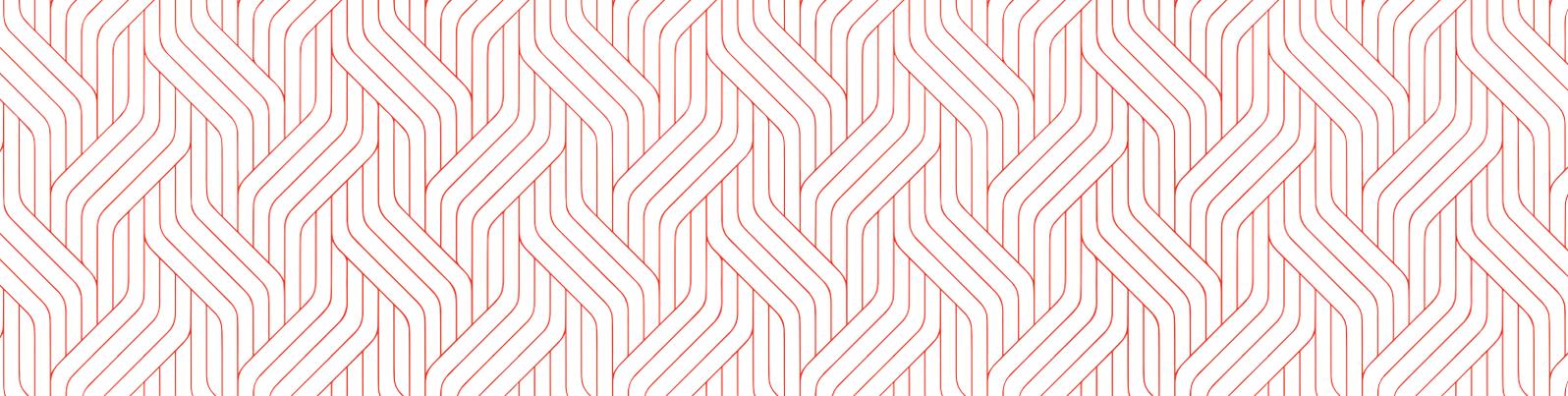
Some security decisions remain puzzling in the face of the immediate security threats. The police did not extend its contract with DAG, the private military contractor who withdrew in early April. A report released by Amnesty International in early March fingered DAG as responsible for indiscriminate killing of civilians in its aerial operations; it denies the claims, but the allegations have fed into an anti-PMC

narrative that has some level of popular appeal. In mid-March, the US State Department claimed the use of PMCs has made the situation worse. Certainly, the PMC presence has coincided with a deterioration of security conditions, and most agree the manner of their deployment was far from ideal. Nevertheless, it appears obvious that the security situation could have been far worse without them in the circumstances and more insight is required to make a factual determination of the cost benefit of their deployment.

The drawing down of DAG has resulted in an aerial security vacuum as the Mozambican airforce has not yet stepped into the breach, despite ongoing preparations to do so. Several attack helicopters have been purchased from the Paramount Group, a South African arms manufacturer with training and preparations of crews and ground teams in their final stages. Paramount has also sold a number of armoured personal carriers to the FADM, reflecting its intent on rebuilding its overall capacity. How these new assets will translate into enhanced operational success in the air and on the ground remains unclear. It also does not address the coastal and maritime security challenge which remains a major part of the overall stability equation.

Retooling and training Mozambique’s military will take time, and although Maputo has been able to secure undertakings from several countries to help it in this endeavour, including the European Union, it must still face off the immediate security threat. The regional body SADC has signaled its intention to intervene. Following Palma, a meeting of regional leaders resulted in the deployment of a technical mission to assess what should be done. They have made recommendations for a major deployment of regional forces, something Mozambique is distinctly hesitant about, pointing to issues of sovereignty and its own plans to maintain point responsibility for counter-insurgency efforts. SADC has yet to make a final determination of how it might assist. Any decisions on deployment, however, will also be contingent on regional capacity and funding, and of course agreement from Maputo.

The humanitarian situation compounds the quagmire Mozambique finds itself in. Almost 800,000 are internally displaced, with over 70% finding refuge amongst host communities, adding huge strain on already limited infrastructure. Displacement camps and resettlement initiatives are not adequately resourced and humanitarian agencies, both local and international, face not only major supply challenges, but must also navigate arduous security and bureaucratic



challenges. In a world of competing humanitarian crises, Cabo Delgado is not receiving the support it requires, compounding an already fraught set of circumstances.

These developments and accompanying challenges underscore the importance of developing an integrated response that address not only the immediate security and humanitarian challenges, but an approach that seeks to address governance and development deficits that have fed into grievances that have fueled instability. The scale of destruction of an already weak infrastructure (i.e health and education) means affected communities will take time to rebuild and recover even when security and stability has been reestablished.

AN ESCALATING CRISIS

Conditions for the people of Cabo Delgado deteriorated markedly during the course of 2020. Over 800 incidents have now been recorded, resulting in over 2600 deaths.⁹ The number of internally displaced has risen dramatically from an estimated 65,000 in December 2019 to almost 670,000 in December 2020.¹⁰ Whilst many are men, women also bear the brunt with hundreds reportedly abducted.¹¹ Since June 2019, Islamic State have claimed responsibility for 45 of these attacks through its various media jihad channels, the bulk of these during 2020.¹² There is some confusion and disagreement on the import of IS affiliation by what remain in essence a locally driven insurgency.

In response to the temporary occupation by insurgents of two district capitals in March 2020, Mozambican government security forces with the aerial support of a South African private anti-poaching company, the Dyck Advisory Group (DAG), (contracted to the Polícia da República de Moçambique – PRM) launched a more concerted counter-insurgency campaign in April that has given the insurgents a bloody nose, but largely failed to curb their initiative. DAG operates with adapted civilian helicopters that have limited range, no defensive capacities and with heavy machine guns bolted onto them, cannibalised from the PRM armoury. They have recently been accused of violating the rules of war and of using indiscriminate force responsible for civilian casualties.¹³

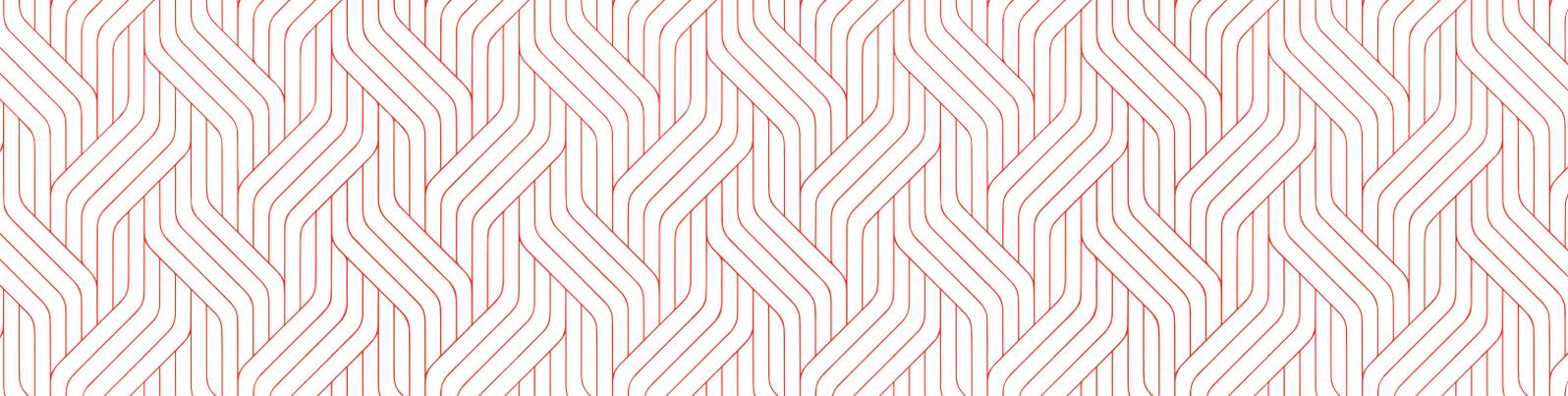
On 11 August 2020, after five days of fighting, hundreds of insurgents forced government troops to abandon the strategic port district capital of Mocimboa da Praia. It was a devastating and embarrassing defeat that coincided with the annual

regional Southern African Development Community (SADC) heads of state and government meeting, at which Mozambique assumed the chair.

On 19 May 2020, following an emergency meeting in Harare, SADC's Organ for Politics Defence and Security gave a green light to member states to support Mozambique's efforts,¹⁴ but almost ten months on SADC has taken no decision on how to proceed, still waiting for Mozambique to provide a roadmap on what support was needed and how members states can contribute towards that. Maputo's prevarication has puzzled many, given the urgency generated by the deteriorating security situation. It certainly wants support, and understandably on its own terms; SADC member states can intervene in terms of Article 6 of its Mutual Defence Pact, but only in extreme circumstances; Mozambique is a liberation movement ally for the key political players in the region who will accommodate its sovereignty politics, even if this deeply frustrates them. Agreement to host a dedicated SADC summit focused on Cabo Delgado in January 2021, but has been postponed, ostensibly due to COVID.¹⁵

The geographical parameters of the insurgency remain localised to eight districts of Cabo Delgado, five in particular.¹⁶ An increasing sophistication in strategy and tactics raise growing prospects that insurgency might spread within Mozambique,¹⁷ and beyond its borders.¹⁸ Since March there has been a series of large-scale attacks on several district capitals, and insurgents continue to initiate the bulk of attacks, as they have done since the insurgency's inception, demonstrating they retain initiative and momentum.¹⁹

The April 2020 counter offensive was the most sustained operation against insurgents by the security forces in a long time. The operations were led by the PRM's Rapid Intervention Force (PRM) with some support from the FADM. DAG reportedly inflicted heavy losses on insurgents over the next two months; the government claimed hundreds of insurgents were killed.²⁰ Avoiding any mention of losses by the Forças de Defesa e Segurança (FDS) or civilian collateral damage, it was an important psychological boost, following months of repeated losses and negative media copy. But the impact of this approach is limited by DAG's own admission.²¹ The extension and expansion of DAG's contract into 2021 first in July and again in December has seen an increase in the number of aerial assets deployed²² and includes ground troop training component,²³ that got underway in August.²⁴



Insurgent attacks continued throughout the second half of 2020, and despite a perceptible downtick in the volume of incidents over the last several months, and a shift to attacks that focused on sourcing food and other supplies, this was not altogether unexpected. The rains in 2019/2020 also witnessed a downtick in attacks, but these picked up again as the “fighting season” resumed. Very few attacks in early February 2021 led some to believe the insurgents were on the back foot, but since then a plethora of attacks across several districts demonstrate the fight is far from over. It also confirms that in spite of a more intense focus of resources by government resources, their ability to hold large swathes of territory remains a major challenge.

COUNTING THE COST

The insurgency has had a devastating impact on many communities in Cabo Delgado: The number of fatalities and injuries remains consistently underreported. Hundreds of women and young girls have been kidnapped; many young men and boys forcibly recruited to join the ranks of the insurgents.²⁵

Communities have been ripped asunder;²⁶ At the end of December, almost 700, 000 people, over a quarter of the province’s population had been displaced.²⁷ In some districts (i.e Mocimboa da Praia, Muidumbe) over 80 per cent of the population have been forced to leave. Many IDPs have been forced to flee more than once as “safe areas”, often larger settlements such as Mocimboa Da Praia, or most recently the islands of Mecungo and Vamisse become vulnerable.²⁸

Most IDPs are women and children and remain in Cabo Delgado, with concentrations in Pemba and Palma; but they are also present in most districts of the province, although increasing numbers are heading further west to Niassa, south to Nampula, and even further south in Zambezia. The situation is dire, as humanitarian agencies struggle, unable to keep up with burgeoning demands;²⁹ Maintaining food supplies has become a priority concern, with only 20% of funds secured to cover projected needs in 2021.³⁰ Most IDPs do not live in established camps, but live amongst host communities; many have fled with nothing and remain dependent on the largesse of families and friends.³¹ Many IDPs have lived for months in a context of pervasive fear, presenting acute psychosocial challenges.³² IDPs and the provision of humanitarian aid are riven with challenges. IDP camps are not well protected, but to date, have not been targeted by insurgents.

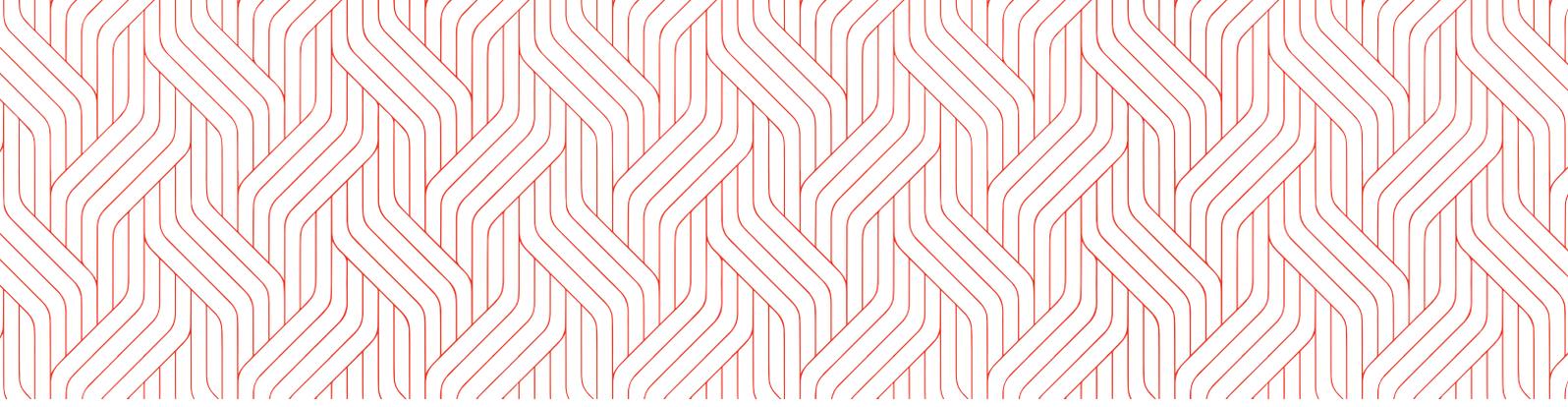
It is unclear how government will deal with this considerable IDP challenge in the long-run. Ideally, if security is re-established in affected districts, communities should be able to return. Some effort has been made to encourage IDPs to return in some areas (e.g. Quissanga) with mixed results, especially in areas where security remained tentative. Some areas, such as Macomia district, more recently have had more success, but the situation overall in the most affected districts is not conducive to return. Huge pressure has been placed on host communities, especially in places like Palma and in particular the district capital Pemba. The government is trying to relieve this pressure by relocating IDP families to what appears more permanent settlement options.

The insurgents have caused widespread infrastructural damage, targeting government infrastructure, administrative buildings, but also schools and health facilities. They have also destroyed thousands of domiciles as part of a scorched earth tactic to push communities out. Hundreds of buildings have also been destroyed in battles between insurgents and government troops in district towns such as Macomia and Mocimboa da Praia.³³ Insurgents have also targeted power and communications infrastructure, as well as banks, and in a few instances churches and mosques. This illustrates a wide array of factors in place when it comes to insurgent ‘targeting’ that militates against simplistic ethnic or religious explanations.

The impact on local economies is devastating; coastal tourism, local food production and the fishing industry has been hit especially hard.³⁴ The cost of transportation, both passenger and goods have contributed to a major spike in the cost of living, at the same time that incomes are increasingly constrained. Deteriorating security has also contributed in a major squeeze on supplies to some affected areas, especially communities on the road from Mueda to Palma, but in Palma itself which has only secured intermittent supplies in recent months. The United Nations has developed a plan to target most urgent needs in Cabo Delgado, but will need to raise significant additional funds to develop and maintain the requisite infrastructure and support for IDPs, many of whom are likely to be displaced for the foreseeable future.³⁵

WHAT DRIVES THE INSURGENCY – PUSH / PULL FACTORS

There is considerable disagreement about the causes and drivers of the insurgency and the weight one places on specific or combinations of factors in play; local



researchers, in particular, emphasise domestic issues such as ethnicity, unequal access to state resources and economic marginalisation (i.e. expelled artisanal miners boosted the ranks of the insurgency in its formative period), whilst others, point at the international jihadi threat and the compounding role of illicit economies.³⁶ The insurgency is commonly described as Islamist, but the religions contours are not well understood, nor how it became a rallying point in a context of marginalisation and underdevelopment.³⁷ Many insurgent victims are Muslim, and most likely constitute the bulk of IDPs.

Although many communities in Cabo Delgado are mixed, the insurgency has been concentrated in Muslim majority areas, especially amongst Makua and coastal Mwani communities. The latter are believed to have made up the bulk of initial insurgent recruits. The Makonde, mainly mission educated, make up the bulk of the province's Christians and have been closely associated with Frelimo since its inception;³⁸ Cabo Delgado was the fulcrum of the independence war, with the Mwani more aligned with the Portuguese colonial authorities, and subsequently with Renamo, especially since the advent of multiparty elections in 1994.³⁹ The Makonde, in alliance with southern political interests, have since independence, developed and maintained a dominant social and economic position in Cabo Delgado;⁴⁰ in 2014, Makonde elite interests were strengthened further with the election of Filipe Nyusi, one of their own, to the presidency. Many Makonde, however, have not benefited from this ethnic elevation⁴¹; a small number are Muslim. Whilst ethnic dynamics are particularly striking, such faultlines do not always neatly align with the contours of the conflict with there is, for example, some evidence of a small number of Kimakonde speakers present amongst the insurgents. Insurgents have also targeted Mwani and Makua speakers, especially if they are aligned with or employed by the state.

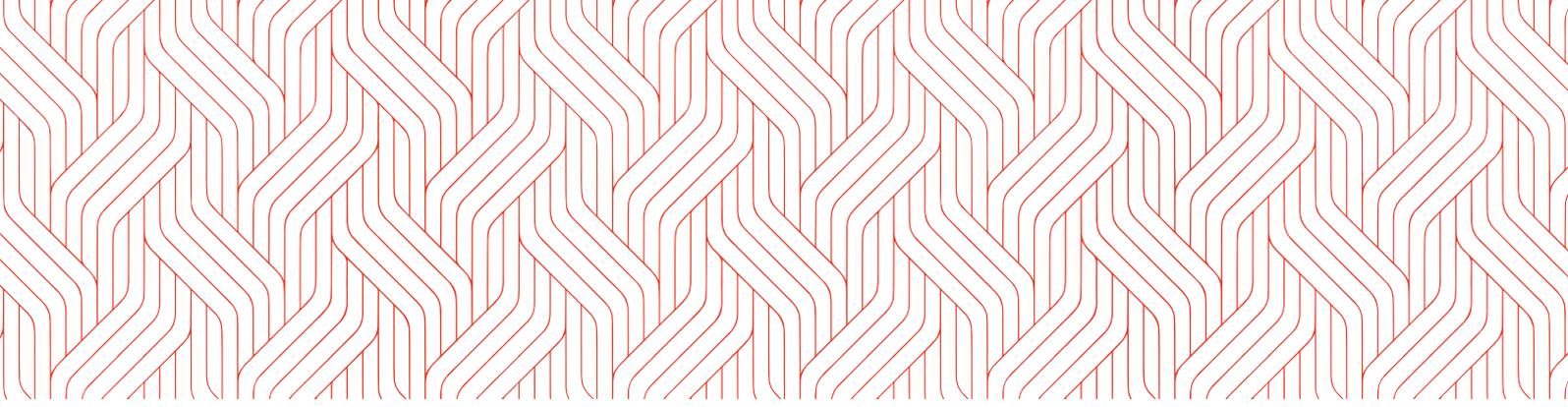
Criminal networks in Cabo Delgado are involved in a range of illicit economies, including natural resource (precious stones, timber, wildlife) smuggling, to human smuggling. The province's coastline also lies at the heart of the international heroin smuggling trade.⁴² These networks have also been exploited by local elites connected to Frelimo and a primary driver of corruption and the breakdown of the rule of law.⁴³ Although insurgents do not control these businesses, they present opportunities for rents, sponsorship, and protection; research concludes that the insurgents' economic base is "diverse and resilient" and is "both supported and connected to

the illicit economy." As such, this raises questions about what interests are in play to sustain high levels of insecurity. More research is necessary to develop a more textured understanding of these relationships, which as the insurgency develops, are likely to mutate.⁴⁴

Analysts and monitors caution about the government's elevation of external causal factors and concurrent downplaying of local drivers of the insurgency.⁴⁵ They have shifted from one simplistic narrative to another, for over two years characterising the violence in Cabo Delgado as the work of criminals and bandits, terminology deployed by Frelimo and the state against Renamo for many years. Since February 2020, the government's public narrative has shifted to blaming external forces, cross broader crime, and Islamist terrorism. This has given wind to Islamic State's own claims and a greater, somewhat disproportionate emphasis on IS influence in . Conversely, the government downplay the complex array of social, political and economic factors in play, and the interface between religious faultlines and other ethnic, social, political and economic divisions. This underscores the need for more research on these factors in relation to the genesis of the conflict, its impact and the actors involved is needed.⁴⁶

WHO ARE THE INSURGENTS? – FROM SECTARIANISM TO JIHAD

The voice of local insurgents remains largely muted, with the exception of some video footage rejecting the Mozambican state and calling for sharia law. Important contemporary research conducted by scholars provides the genesis of divisions and tensions within the Muslim community that developed in the 2010s leading to the emergence of radicalised groups in various parts of Cabo Delgado who challenged the orthodoxy and authority of (largely Sufi) mainstream Islamic institutions.⁴⁷ The presence of external influences in the Cabo Delgado conflict is to be expected; communities on the Swahili coast have been connected and integrated to a wider world of influences for hundreds of years.⁴⁸ The influence of individuals who had been on religious scholarships, especially to Saudi Arabia,⁴⁹ was complemented by the influence external elements from the Swahili coast,⁵⁰ (i.e. the radical preacher Aboud Rogo whose Swahili teachings were accessible), were instrumental in these developments.⁵¹ The group has several monikers, Ahlu Sunna wa-Jama, Swahili Sunna, Ansar al-Sunnah', but is most commonly known and referred to as 'Al-Shabaab' ("The Boys"), though not to be confused with the insurgent grouping in Somalia.



The group's activities spread across several districts of Cabo Delgado;⁵² they disengaged from mainstream mosques, adopted an increasingly sectarian approach in their daily lives, rejecting state institutions, removing their children from government schools and following their own religious protocols with. This evolution was uneven amongst the movement's followers and interplayed with existing social, ethnic and political tensions that were particularly strong in certain towns. There was no apparent headquarters, although the group had two mosques in Mocimboa da Praia by 2016 and this area is widely regarded as centrifugal to the movement in general. Local Muslim leaders tried to engage the sect, but failing to rein in the group subsequently played an aggravating role by encouraging the government to clamp down on them. The government, which has been treating the issue as an internal matter within the Muslim community, only did so after violent clashes between group members and the authorities, which happened on several occasions from late 2015. The government ordered the destruction of mosques and many sect members were arrested. In the face of growing opposition and state suppression, the sect then shifted its strategy towards a more violent and confrontational stance.

ISLAMIC STATE'S GROWING PRESENCE – Fact or Fiction?

What influence do international jihadi groups have on the insurgency? On 4 June 2019, Islamic State's Central Africa Province (ISCAP) claimed responsibility for its first attack in Mozambique.⁵³ ISCAP had officially franchised the ADF operating in eastern DRC a few months earlier and according to IS media channels was now working in Cabo Delgado with the Ahlu Sunna wa Jama / Al Shabaab which had declared their allegiance to IS in 2018. ISCAP has since claimed responsibility for 45 attacks in Cabo Delgado. Most of these claims correlate with other incident source reports, although detail often varies; IS propaganda having a penchant for triumphalism and exaggeration, as well as airbrushing losses. A number of reports are accompanied by pictures of captured ordnance and dead government security force members. The focus remains on targeting state assets and its representatives.

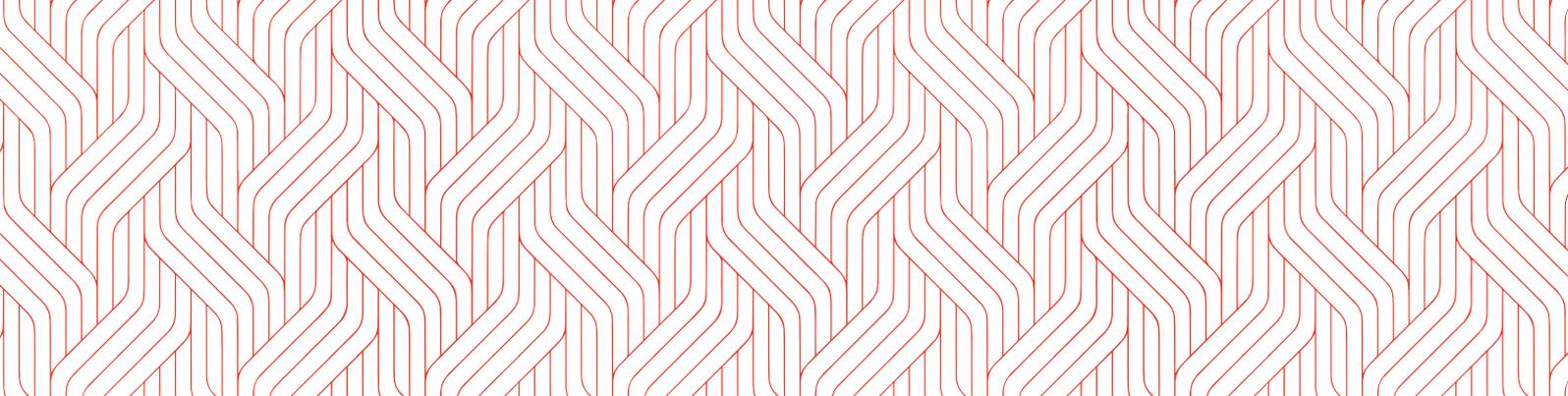
The exact nature and evolution of IS relations with local insurgents remains unclear. Opinion is divided between those claiming the ASWJ is an affiliate with varying levels of direct and indirect engagement, and those who oppose such categorisation. Most agree that external interests will seek to exploit local grievances and would not gain traction without

them.⁵⁴ As such, there is a common understanding that the conditions in Cabo Delgado are ripe for such exploitation and there is no room for complacency. The absence of a clear set of demands from beyond inconsistent messaging on IS propaganda channels and a handful of crude mobile phone messages and images from fighters on the ground provide little insight at this juncture into the demands and objectives of insurgents beyond a rejection of the Mozambique state and a call to follow some version of Sharia law.⁵⁵ The picture therefore remains very murky.

For over two years, in deference to Maputo's own narrative, the region and continent did not publicly respond to developments in Cabo Delgado. In January 2020, however, South Africa's Minister for International Relations and Cooperation, Dr. Naldee Pandor, warned about the presence of IS in Mozambique and the wider threat this presented to the SADC region.⁵⁶ In February, the AU's peace and security commissioner Smail Chergui recommended the AU assist with training and equipment.⁵⁷ Since then, Mozambique has pointed its finger at IS and other external forces.⁵⁸

The Islamic State official weekly magazine al Naba (edition 241) carried an article on the insurgency in Mozambique in July 2020.⁵⁹ This article is disconcerting as it presents a threshold moment in the Cabo Delgado conflict. It reflects a focused effort to project and magnify IS involvement, presenting the group as leading actor in the insurgency, claiming the government of Mozambique is on the threshold of defeat, warning the LNG sector its investments will be targeted, as will regional countries considering support for Maputo.⁶⁰ Pretoria, under pressure to reboot its flagging intelligence services, is taking the issue seriously.⁶¹





The AL Naba article reflects an extension of its focus beyond battlefield propaganda, propagating a more focused ideological message about the IS mission. References to Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon serves as warning to the Mozambique Government that Islamic State presence is seldom easily defeated and a prolonged insurgency is at play.⁶²

But this editorial has not translated into a clearer picture of IS linkages to Cabo Delgado. Claims that Islamic State deployed personnel to Cabo Delgado and/or is now in control and directing operations have not been verified with,⁶³ nor have claims that Islamic State is responsible for training, weapons and equipment supply.⁶⁴ The presence of foreign elements amongst the insurgents, however, has been established.⁶⁵ The Mozambican government has made reference to Tanzanian “leaders”⁶⁶, but anecdotal evidence suggests the bulk of fighters and leaders are local. There have also been several reports of “white”, “fair-skin” and “blue-eyed” men amongst them. Such elements, if present, suggests support has come from further afield (i.e. Middle East, North Africa or even the Caucasus), but it does not confirm the IS link and the evidentiary base of such remains extremely thin. Nevertheless, this doesn’t mean IS has no interest in the conflict; this it clearly does. This also requires a more nuanced understanding of organisational linkages and how this translates into tangible developments ‘on the ground’. Beyond propaganda and possible tactical and strategic advice, the relationship doesn’t yet appear to be anything more than early exploratory stages of franchising the IS brand, or perhaps part of a longer-term incubation. IS media channels have responded to less than 5% of reported incidents on the ground, such as major attacks on district capitals, but also some smaller confrontations. They remain mute on other major incidences, including the capture of Mocimboa da Praia port. The uneven quality of reporting on insurgency reflects weak communications with operations on the ground.

MOVING TOWARDS A SUSTAINED INSURRECTION

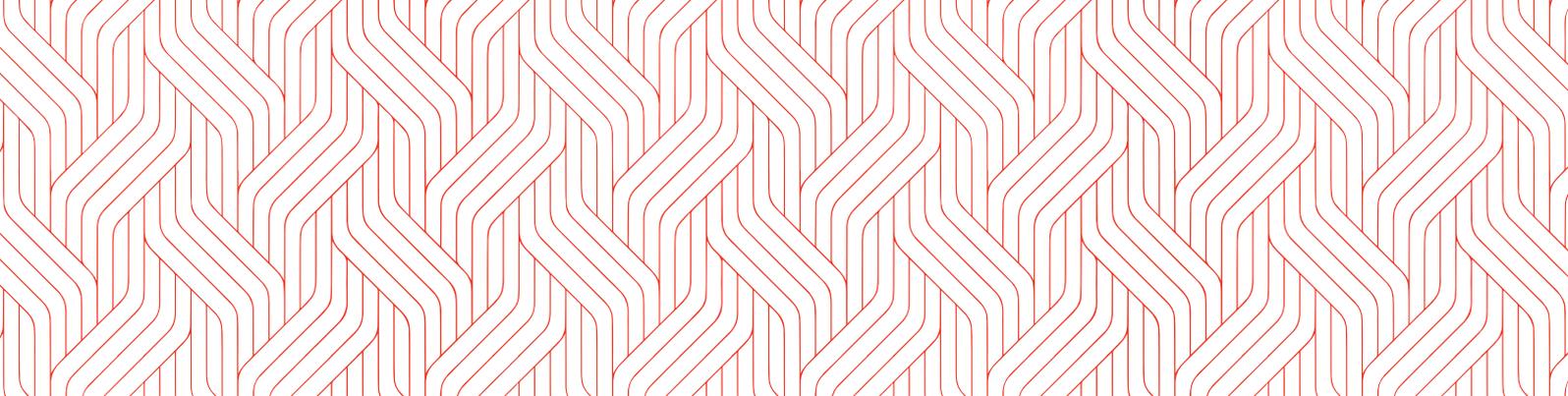
Evident advancements in strategic and tactical competency strongly suggests the insurgents are benefiting from external advice, although this support could come from disaffected domestic elements with security force experience.⁶⁷ Operationally, over three years, insurgents have developed from small groups of men armed mostly with machetes, operating in cells of between 5 to 10 in late 2017 to being able to execute major operations involving hundreds of well-armed insurgents in multi-pronged attacks. In the face of security

force counter-attacks, they have demonstrated an ability to withdraw and split into smaller formations (i.e. force dispersal) and to subsequently reassemble for larger-scale attacks. Insurgents have established a number of bases and have built arsenals, largely from captured weapons, but also through illicit channels.⁶⁸

Since early January 2020, there was a rapid escalation in attacks, sometimes simultaneously in several districts. Attacks on district capitals in late March and April reflected enhanced tactical and strategic capacity; these offensives were not designed as long-term occupations, but rather major propaganda, recruitment and resource / resupply operations. Insurgents have been able to control strategic roads and junctions; the main north-south artery between Pemba and Palma, for example, has become a no-go area and in recent months, the northern road from Mueda, through Nangade to Palma has also become extremely dangerous. In many areas, insurgents have given early warning that they will attack certain areas, giving the local populace time to flee. This has contributed to the surge of IDPs this year, leaving large swathes of affected districts depopulated, a sort of no-man’s land, not under insurgent ‘control’, but also not secured by state security forces. This tactic is incongruous, as it militates against the establishment of zones of governance and has also compromised the insurgent’s food supplies. But, the movement of large numbers of IDPs has also provided opportunity for infiltration. The discovery of an arms cache in Pemba in late 2019 and another in March 2020 is understandably cause for significant consternation.⁶⁹

The insurgents have been able to enforce no-go areas, as demonstrated in the areas south of Mocimboa da Praia, following its temporary capture in March, until security forces launched a major offensive in early June.⁷⁰ This apparently successful security force operation may have disrupted insurgents in the area, but did not avert a subsequent three-pronged attack on Mocimboa da Praia in the early hours of Saturday 27th June and the subsequent attack on the same town in August.

It is not known how many insurgents are active. Estimates vary from approximately the low hundreds to over 3,000. The government claims it has killed several hundred since March, and analysts point to attacks allegedly involving hundreds of insurgents, suggesting there could be several thousand under arms. Recruitment includes pressganging, and in some



instances, payment for services. A hardcore ideological element is likely to represent a small minority of the fighters, but this may change as radicalising fighters is likely to accompany insurgent activities. Operating through a decentralised command and control structure, they operate from larger bases (several of which have been destroyed by the FDS) and smaller temporary bases more proximate to their targets. The relative long term occupation of Mocimboa da Praia has enabled the insurgents to turn this into a logistical and training hub. As most are local, they have an operational “home advantage”, knowing the terrain, language, and customs. They have also generated a relatively sophisticated intelligence gathering capacity, using the local population as well as sources from within the state, including the security forces. Operationally, they have been able to maintain the element of surprise in many attacks, demonstrating how the initiative continues to lie with them.⁷¹

THE STATE'S RESPONSE: BEYOND HARD SECURITY

Cabo Delgado presents a worsening security threat, underpinned by major development and human security challenges. As we have seen, the government is struggling to put in place a workable hard security strategy to contain the insurgents, let alone one that will defeat them. Its security forces are mired in allegations of human rights violations, and of failing to win the hearts and minds of the local population. But it must think beyond the actual parameters of fighting to confront the drivers and accelerators of the conflict (i.e. social and economic marginalisation with a focus on youth employment), tackling its consequences (i.e. infrastructural damage, dislocation, de-radicalisation) and building local dialogue and dispute resolution capacity with an emphasis on (re)building local social capital and credible community leadership. President Nyusi, recognises at least from a conceptual point of view, the importance moving beyond a militarised approach. In March, he announced the launch of a government development agency, the Agency for Integrated Development in the North (ADIN) covering the provinces of Nampula, Niassa and Cabo Delgado and opened its doors in late August.⁷² ADIN will give a particular focus to youth needs, but has yet to put in place its programming framework and is in the process of conducting needs assessment and developing its strategic plans. It is still early days, and the government itself has not allocated funds, as security remains the priority spending.⁷³ It has, however, secured commitments of over US\$750 from multilateral partners.⁷⁴ The government ministry

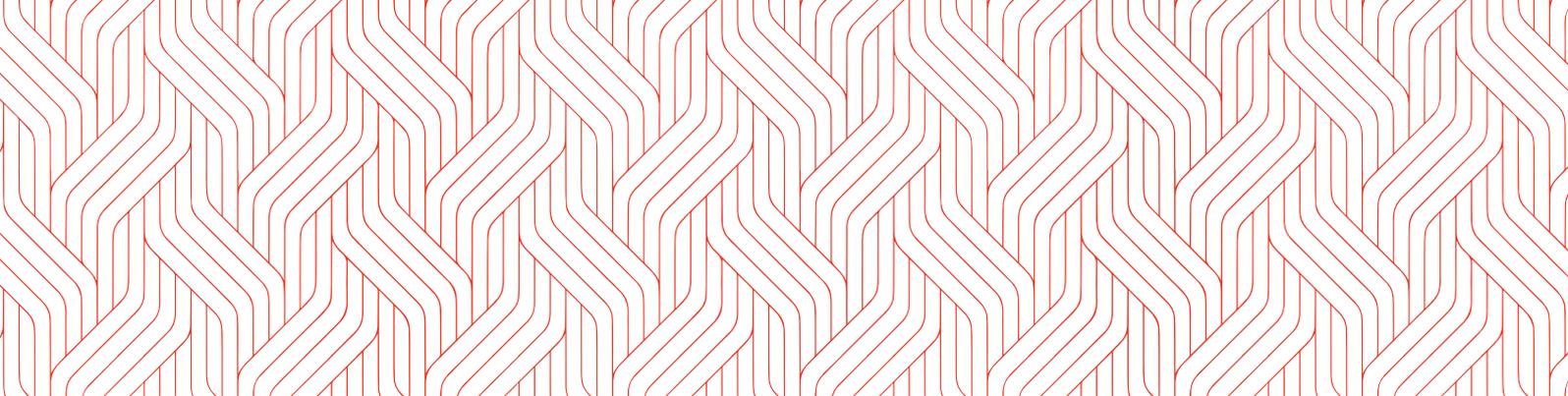
with line responsibility is consumed with the challenges of the immediate humanitarian situation. The new agency does, however, present an unprecedented opportunity to develop a new approach, something recognised by a number of donors.⁷⁵

A MILITARISED RESPONSE NOT FIT FOR PURPOSE

The government's counter-insurgency strategy has been led by the Polícia da República da Moçambique (PRM) and its specialist Rapid Intervention Unit, supported by the FADM. Neither police nor military operate with doctrines tailored for counter-insurgency. The military is considerably weakened with a poorly trained, badly paid army of approximately ten thousand with no battle experience,⁷⁶ and a small ill-equipped navy and airforce.⁷⁷ Budget constraints and competing spending priorities mean an almost total dependence on foreign largesse as the lion's share of the budget is spent on salaries. There is considerable disagreement over strategy and tactics, who should be in charge and competition over limited resources. This compounds the effectiveness of command and control and operational efficiencies around intelligence work and logistics.

The state's response to the initial sporadic armed attacks was mass arrests and the destruction of mosques associated with Al Shabaab.⁷⁸ This fuelled indignation and a sense of alienation, feeding the recruitment drive. As insurgent actions intensified and the security forces were increasingly targeted, they were able to source more weapons during 2018 and 2019. Having resuscitated its defence and security pact with Russia, Maputo turned to the Russian PMC, the Wagner Group, who deployed with government security forces in September and October 2019 ahead of parliamentary and presidential elections, ostensibly to shore up security for the elections, but inevitably getting drawn into contacts with the insurgents.; The number of insurgent attacks dropped significantly, until attacks on the Wagner team and concerns about compromised security prompted the PMC's withdrawal⁷⁹ and a subsequent surge of new insurgent attacks in November.

Until March 2020, government forces remained on the defensive as insurgent attacks continued without any visible pushback. In April, the Dyck Advisory Group (DAG) a South African based private company deployed on a short-term contract to provide aerial support to ground forces.⁸⁰ DAG, who had extensive experience with anti-poaching did not have combat experience as an organisation, but could



draw on employees and contractors who did. Their initial deployment into the field in April with limited assets (i.e. two helicopter gunships, and guns mounted on a handful of fixed wing aircraft also used for surveillance) coupled with a more sustained government security ground force campaign presented insurgents with an unprecedented test; but government forces, despite making some progress, had limited competencies and were unable to maintain momentum, in turn giving insurgents space to adapt their strategy and tactics. DAG have been accused of killing civilians and responsibility in some blue on blue incidents.⁸¹ DAG acknowledged their aerial response has limited application and was not a winning formula.⁸²

In early July, DAG's contract was extended until the end of 2020. It expanded the number of helicopter gunships in operation (up to eight in operation) and a ground force training component that will put in place a crack unit that can be deployed in conjunction with aerial attacks.⁸³ Despite outstanding concerns about the legality of DAG's involvement in the conflict in terms of South African law,⁸⁴ this new contract reflects a continuing faith in the PMC ahead of other prospective support from SADC member states or further afield.

Competition between the PRM and FADM over supplies and contracts⁸⁵ has frustrated efforts to build a unified command structure. In effect, two parallel command structures have been in operation. The PRM's point role has been increasingly challenged by those wanting to promote the elevation of the FADM to taking the leading role. Compounding these dynamics, government security forces are mired in operational, intelligence and logistical / supply line challenges have and continue to constrain the security forces' effectiveness.⁸⁶ Government security forces are unlikely to be able to overcome these challenges in the short to medium term and will need to expedite options for building capacity, to maximise broader operational effectiveness, but also in terms of building a longer-term sustainable security strategy. Additional support is urgently required, and until that is in place, the state's response will not be fit for purpose.⁸⁷ In mid-January, President Nyusi appointed Eugenio Mussa as Chief of the Defence Force; Mussa had been the month before put in charge of Cabo Delgado operations. At the same time, Nyusi announced the military would be taking over point in the fight against insurgents.⁸⁸ But plans to operationalise this decision were set back by the subsequent death of Mussa, less than a month after his appointment,⁸⁹ and the realities of limited FADM capacity

on the ground. For the time being two command structures remain in place; whilst the FADM looks set to purchase new equipment (i.e. armoured vehicles, helicopters) and put in place new training programmes to build capacity with the assistance of outside forces (i.e. Portuguese), the likelihood of substantial progress on the security front seems unlikely for some time and a reliance on the PRM and its PMC contractors will continue.

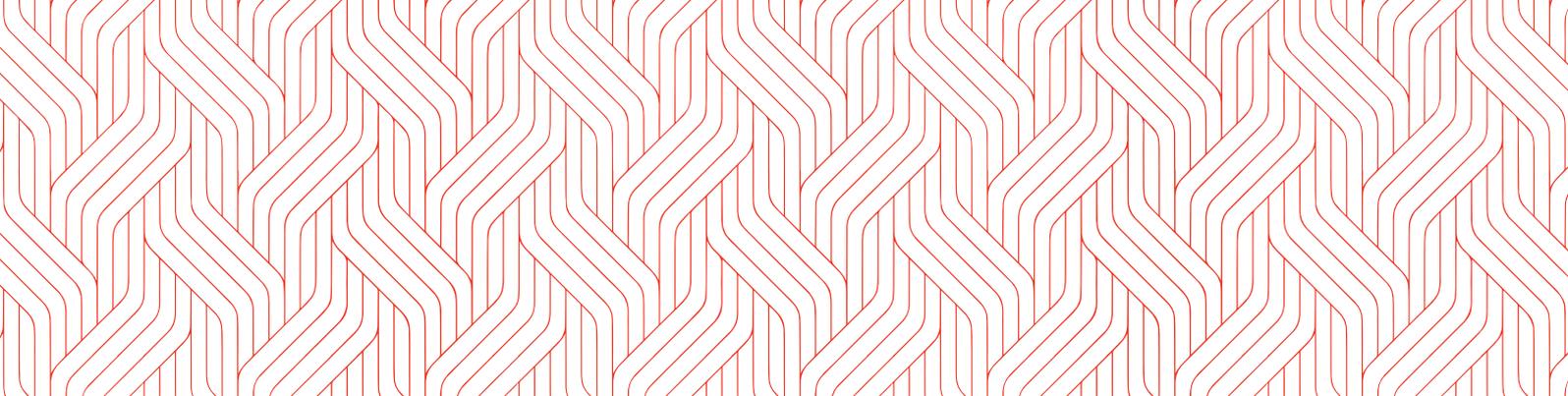
LOSING THE BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MINDS

Community-State relations in Cabo Delgado have deteriorated markedly. In many affected districts, government officials were the first to leave, knowing they would be targeted by insurgents, resulting in a collapse of basic governance, leaving local populations abandoned. Relations with the security forces were already tense, and the government's militarised approach to the conflict, including the appointment of military administrators in certain affected districts, has not improved the situation.⁹⁰

The security forces are accused of serious human rights violations in their fight against insurgents, including torture, abduction and extra judicial executions; In many instances, they have struggled to distinguish between insurgents and ordinary civilians, with the latter often caught in security force dragnet operations.⁹¹ Denial and avoidance of such violations is the order of the day,⁹² although more recently the government has acknowledged the need to proceed more cautiously in a context where insurgents are not always distinguishable from civilians.⁹³

Civilians have borne the brunt of insurgency and counter-insurgency – the classic “man in the middle”⁹⁴ – but in some instances they appear to harbour sympathies for the insurgents and are even actively supportive,⁹⁵ which fuels resentments within government security forces.

In early September 2020, Amnesty International called on the government to investigate the content of five videos and several photographs depicting security force members purportedly torturing insurgent suspects.⁹⁶ Instead of undertaking to look into these matters, the government have retained a denial posture.⁹⁷ This approach militates against improving community relations and reflects a broader challenge for reporting on the insurgency as government pushes back against critics, despite recent claims that journalists are welcome.⁹⁸ How the government responds to the recent



Amnesty report released in early March will set the tone moving forward, but prospects for putting in place an effective winning hearts and minds (WHAM) strategy continues to be undermined by weak communications.⁹⁹

PROSPECTS FOR PRIORITISING DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN SECURITY

Mozambique's hard security strategy, even if effectively executed, remains disconnected from a clear human security and development agenda. Active measures must be taken to integrate these objectives. This, in turn, should be tied to a framework that focuses on countering and preventing violent extremism (i.e. CVE and PVE).¹⁰⁰ A community-based approach that responds to specific conditions and bespoke needs should also be tied to donor support designed to promote social cohesion and better relations between communities and the state.¹⁰¹

The launch of ADIN in late August provides a real opportunity for the government to integrate development and human security into the current counter-insurgency approach. The agency is headed by a 77 year old war veteran, Armando Panguene, a former deputy defence minister and governor of Cabo Delgado. Some are concerned he will be unsuited to bringing new ideas to the table,¹⁰² whilst others believe he is well suited to navigating entrenched interests.¹⁰³ ADIN falls under the powerful ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and Panguene must tag team effectively with the increasingly influential Minister Celso Correia.¹⁰⁴

ADIN also has responsibility for humanitarian work. Its handling of the immediate humanitarian needs in Cabo Delgado will be an important litmus test of capacity. At its launch, Minister Correia promised to play a point role in providing support to 70,000 families. But it has secured only 5 per cent of its promised funding and will need to significantly more capacity to ramp up its programming to address emergency needs in conjunction with international and domestic partners. Demonstrating clean accounting and efficient responsiveness will help build confidence amongst affected communities and the donor community.¹⁰⁵

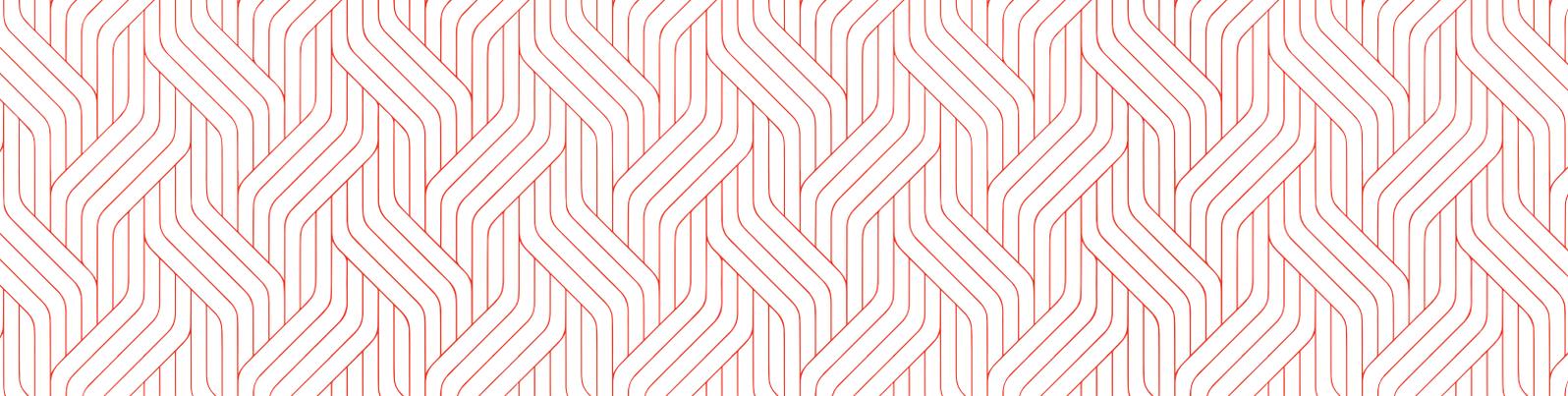
Extending this focus to encompass options for tackling violent extremism presents an immediate, but also medium to longer term challenge. ADIN would benefit from a closer association with academic and civil society to develop more research

that can guide appropriate programming. The government must move beyond its standoffish relationship with critical civil society groups and work with them as a resource to build relations with community-based organisations in Cabo Delgado. Particular attention should be given to building processes that connect the LNG projects, in particular, to the wider community, in terms of an inclusive economic development and services potential¹⁰⁶ approach that promotes augments transparency and accountability, and by extension improving communications and dispute resolution options. The LNG project must benefit and be seen to benefit ordinary Mozambicans.¹⁰⁷

WHAT ROLE FOR REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

Mozambique is in dire need of support to tackle the insurgency, but prefers to see what it can procure from bilateral negotiations, rather than submitting to international peace and security protocols, or SADC region's peace and security architecture. Maputo needs support on an array of fronts, from beefing up maritime security (coastal security is a critical front in the insurgency), to improved intelligence and surveillance, ordnance and other equipment, including armoured personnel carriers and airlift capacity. Since 2019, it has been actively reaching out for support, to PMCs, individual African countries and further afield, including France, the EU U.S and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries. It has had limited success thus far, despite promising undertakings of support from several quarters. It has a limited budget, which partly explains its preferred option to see what it can secure on a bilateral basis from other countries to build around a rebooted homegrown security operation backed by PMCs.

At the May SADC OPDS, Maputo was tasked with developing a plan of action that would provide a basis for negotiation with member states regarding options for assistance. Four months on and Mozambique has yet to present its roadmap to SADC, reflecting continuing hesitancy and inertia, but also a degree of disagreement within Mozambique's security command. SADC member states are in a position to assist.¹⁰⁸ This does not necessarily mean 'boots' on the ground, and any support will require financing, which is not currently covered by SADC or domestic budget constraints, now exacerbated by the impact of COVID 19. There has already been some response from the region, Tanzania has strengthened border security¹⁰⁹, and; Zimbabwe has allegedly deployed thirty advisers from its special forces and intelligence community.¹¹⁰



South Africa has said it is ready to assist if asked.¹¹¹ There is some question about what it can really offer given consistent underfunding of its own defence forces.¹¹² There are clearly areas of bespoke support that could bolster Mozambique's capacity,¹¹³ but how they would operate within existing command and control and in a context of existing intelligence deficits will present a major challenge for whoever deploys. Discussions have been ongoing behind closed doors, but Mozambique must complete its plan of action to help guide the framework of engagement.¹¹⁴ This is largely uncharted territory for both Mozambique and the region, although Mozambique does have experience in the 1980s of working closely with the Zimbabwean military, who remain for many in Mozambique a preferred option.

As attacks come closer to Palma and the LNG sites, the government has ramped up its security efforts on the Afungi peninsula. In August, they signed a security agreement with French oil major, Total, building on a previous MOU crafted with LNG companies (and Total's predecessor, Andarko) in March 2019.¹¹⁵ The MOU provides for Total to provide logistical support to a "joint task force" that will provide security to the LNG facilities. Five hundred troops are already deployed to defend the installations and a further three hundred and fifty will now be made available as part of effort to strengthen security following the December / January attacks that came close to the LNG site.

Concerns are mounting that the agreement will reinforce an approach to security that ironclads a so-called 'green zone' and related security corridors, privileging security for the LNG site and its employees over local communities; it could also generate divisions within the security sector, with those 'green-zone' insulated from the realities faced by colleagues in the conflict arena.¹¹⁶ Details of the agreement remains secret, in contradiction of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights. These emphasise the importance of LNG companies engaging government and civil society to develop a community-based model to security. In the interests of all parties, the agreement should be made public.

CONCLUSION

Now into its fourth year, Cabo Delgado's insurgency has rendered major damage across large swathes of the province. Much remains unknown about core characteristics of the violence, the actors involved and the damage rendered. This includes longer-term psychological damage to a population

caught in a vortex of violence and insecurity.¹¹⁷ What is clear though is that the security and humanitarian situation is set to deteriorate further in coming months. Every effort must be made to encourage a response from the state that promotes the prioritizing of human security and humanitarian needs, that emphasises development, de-radicalisation and a return to and promotion of competent governance and basic service delivery. It also necessitates an appropriate hard security response that respects core human rights, and takes better advantage of the offers of assistance on the table from the international community. Mozambique's president and political leadership are under tremendous pressure to make progress, but they must do so in a way that instills confidence and demonstrates it has a plan that the region and international community can fall behind.

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⁶³ Several reports allege an IS presence before June 2019: In January 2018, the Al Shabaab group used social media to call on Mozambicans to join their fight for an Islamic state, claiming they would be soon announcing their allegiance to (now deceased) ISIS leader, al-Baghdadi. “The Islamic State in East Africa”, *Hiraal Institute and The Global Strategy Network*, p.43; In April 2018, a South African publication claimed a group of ninety ISIS fighters had been infiltrated into Mozambique, “Isis fighters infiltrate neighbouring Mozambique (part 1)”, *Lowvelder*, 13 April 2018. The following month, the AU alleged IS had “expanded its reach” to Mozambique (and neighbouring Tanzania) amongst others, “AU confirms ISIS infiltration in countries, including Somalia”,

AllAfrica.com, 24 May 2018. Claims of IS deployments post June 2019 have not been confirmed, but remain in circulation within intelligence and social media networks.

⁶⁴ Op Cit, pp. 9-10. Eeben Barlow in his latest biography claims that the group established training camps in several districts during 2015-16 period, with training provided by disgruntled former government security officers contracted militants from east Africa; Al Shabaab members also travelled outside of Mozambique for training. Eeben Barlow, "The War For Africa: Conflict, Crime Corruption and Foreign Interests", African Warrior Press, 2020, p.428.

⁶⁵ In June 2018, 189 people, including 50 Tanzanians, 3 Ugandans and a Somali were put on trial for their alleged involvement in Islamist attacks. In October 2018, Tanzania arrested over one hundred suspected Tanzanian militants planning to establish base in Cabo Delgado. "Mozambique – Tanzania: Suspects on trial over jihadist attacks", Africa Research Online, 5 November 2018. "Mozambique Defence Forces killed two leaders of terrorist group, they were Tanzanian nationals – Minister", Club of Mozambique, 1 June 2020. Stories of fair skinned, blue-eyed men seen at insurgent camps have been in circulation for some months; Foreigners were allegedly identified amongst the attackers during the August assault on Mocimboa da Praia, "Rebels drover residents out of strategically important city". Centre Jornalismo Investigativo, 26 August 2020.

⁶⁶ "Leaders of Islamist insurgency in Mozambique 'killed' – minister", Upstream Online, 1 June 2020.

⁶⁷ Private communications, security expert, 1 September 2020.

⁶⁸ "Southern African Jihad: Part II of III", Inteylse, March 2020. This report sets out the evolution of the insurgency between October 2017 and January 2020.

⁶⁹ "Population suspended between astonishment and insecurity after assault on Cabo Delgado towns", Voice of America, 1 April 2020.

⁷⁰ "Government forces drive insurgents out of Mocimboa base", Zitamar News, 11 June 2020.

⁷¹ Insurgents have been able to mount 'inside out' operations disguising themselves as civilians or wearing security force uniforms and attacking from behind defensive lines. In the recent attack at Mocimboa da Praia, this enabled them to attack

security force members unexpectedly. They have also appear to have access to operational and tactical planning from local bases and even the headquarters. "Cabo Delgado Insurgency: Intelligence Briefing", Focus Group, 19 August 2020.

⁷² "Solution to the problem of Cabo Delgado is not just military", Lusa, 20 August 2020.

⁷³ "Cabo Ligado Weekly: 7 – 13 December 2020", ACLED, 15 December 2020.

⁷⁴ "Government mobilises US\$764 million for ADIN to develop northern Mozambique".

⁷⁵ "Why should we support Cabo Delgado? World Back Group", Modern Diplomacy, 13 October 2020.

⁷⁶ International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) (2016). The Military Balance 2016. London: IISS. pp. 457-458.m.

⁷⁷ International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) (2016). The Military Balance 2016. London: IISS. pp. 457-458.m.

⁷⁸ "Six mosques reopened, seven "actually destroyed" in Cabo Delgado", 28 May 2018.

⁷⁹ "7 Kremlin-Linked Mercenaries killed in Mozambique in October – Military Sources", The Moscow Times, 31 October 2019.

⁸⁰ Several PMCs were jostling for the contract with the PRM to support counter-insurgency operations. DAG's founder, Lionel Dyck is well connected to and respected by Mozambique's securocrats having been part of the Zimbabwean military team that helped government troops capture Renamo's headquarters Gorongosa in the mid 1980s. DAG has also been able to offer a cheaper PMC operation, but as a result is dependent on Mozambican intelligence, ordnance, supplies and logistical support.

⁸¹ Cabo Ligado Weekly: 1 – 7 June 2020, Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED).

⁸² Hannes Wessels, "Colonel Dyck and the Fight for Northern Mozambique", Africa Unauthorised, 17 July 2020. Security analysts have commended DAG for what they have been able to achieve in the circumstances. Johann Smith, African Perspectives, SABC, 12 August 2020.

⁸³ “Mozambique extends DAG mercenary contract for Cabo Delgado war”, Zitamar News, 16 July 2020. DAG’s training will draw on Rhodesian and South African counter insurgency experiences and will most likely incorporate “fireforce” tactics of helicopter borne infantry deployments backed by aerial attack.

⁸⁴ The South African government have not responded officially to this situation; despite reports of law enforcement agencies investigating DAG in terms of violating the Foreign Military Assistance Act, the government has turned a blind eye to DAG deployment, allowing it to move assets across the South African – Mozambican border in a context of COVID where border are officially closed except for trade, repatriation and other exceptional circumstances. South Africa’s minister for international relations, Dr Naledi Pandor, has accepted that DAG is working as a contractor to the state and not in a mercenary capacity. Briefing on security situation in Cabo Delgado, in Northern Mozambique by DIRCO/Minister Pandor to Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation, 2 September 2020.

⁸⁵ “Police and Military fight over who controls the war – and contracts”, AllAfrica.com, 23 June 2020.

⁸⁶ DAG’s flight time and time over target during the August battle for Mocimboa da Praia was acutely compromised by having to refuel at Pemba rather than at facilities half the distance. Cabo Ligado Weekly: 10 – 16 August, p.3.

⁸⁷ “Security Brief” Centro de Estudos Estrangicos e Internacionais (CEEI), Universidade Joaquim Chissano, Ano 2, Vol 1, No.3, June 2020. CEEI’s report provides a damning critique of the security forces, the need for a major restructuring and the multiple failures in play to address the insurgency, including major intelligence failures and underestimations of the insurgents, and why continued use of PMCs makes pragmatic sense at this juncture. CEEI is regarded as a semi-official think tank whose views will be taken seriously. Joseph Hanlon, “News Reports & Clippings”, No. 497, 2 August 2020.

⁸⁸ “Mozambican President hands control of the Army in insurgency battle”, Bloomberg, 18 January 2021.

⁸⁹ “Nyusi forced unexpectedly into reshuffling his army high command”, Africa Intelligence, 18 February 2021.

⁹⁰ “Militarization of Cabo Delgado likely to prolong the insurgency”, Zitamar News, 7 July 2020.

⁹¹ “Mozambique: Security forces abusing suspected insurgents”, Human Rights Watch, 4 December 2018.

⁹² “Mozambican government rejects allegations of human rights violations in Cabo Delgado”, Lusa, 4 March 2019. The government has not responded to the release of the March 2021 Amnesty International report at the time of writing.

⁹³ “Cabo Delgado: “Terrorists are mixed with the population”, admits the interior minister”, Voice of America, 28 August 2020; Zenaïdo Machada, “Mozambique should protect civilians during insurgent fight”, Human Rights Watch, 14 August 2020.

⁹⁴ “The Man in the Middle: Civil War in Rhodesia: Torture , Resettlement & Eviction” was published in April 1975 by the Rhodesian Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, and provided insight into dangerous environment that civilians must navigate to stay onside with both government security forces and insurgents. The imperative of survival means difficult choices must be made. Civilians fear both insurgents and security forces, but often the insurgents more.

⁹⁵ Interior Minister, Amade Miquidade and Defence Minister, Jaime Neto have raised concerns about civilian assistance to the insurgents. “Terrorismo e a infiltração de armas de fogo na cidade de Pemba. Polícia confirma!” MediaFax, No. 7144, 31 August 2020.

⁹⁶ “Mozambique: Torture by security forces in gruesome videos must be investigated”, Amnesty International, 9 September 2020.

⁹⁷ “Mozambique military denies torture allegations as Amnesty Repeats calls for investigations”, Zitamar News 11 September 2020; “SDS deny allegations of human rights violations in Cabo Delgado”, O Pais, 10 September 2020.

⁹⁸ Cabo Ligado Weekly: 31 August – 6 September, p.4. Private media continues to operate, but with some constraints when it comes to sensitive copy, including coverage on Cabo Delgado. The recent arson attack on the offices of Canal de Moçambique, is the latest in a long line of violations against journalists that include arbitrary arrest, abduction and assassination. Deprose

Muchena, “Mozambican authorities must stop the attack on media freedom”, Mail & Guardian, 8 September 2020.

⁹⁹ The government calls on communities to cooperate but struggles to build trust in many communities, unable to put in place any kind of effective community policing. Reports from the ground suggest local militia have been activated in some districts, but it is unclear how widespread this is, and how it is tied to evolving counterinsurgency strategy and tactics.

¹⁰⁰ Faith Mabera & Sanusha Naidoo, “Entering into the fray? The extremist threat in Cabo Delgado: Strategic policy choices for South Africa and SADC”, Institute for Global Dialogue, Global Insight Issue 137, September 2020; Bulama Bukarti & Sandun Munasinghe, “The Mozambique Conflict and Deteriorating Security Situation”, Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, June 2020, p.11.

¹⁰¹ “Building Social Cohesion in Cabo Delgado,” USAID Mozambique, February 2020.

¹⁰² interview, Mozambique governance expert, 10 January 2021.

¹⁰³ President Nyusi recently made reference to corrupt security force elements that are benefitting from the conflict in Cabo Delgado. This is not the first time he has made such reference, although it is unclear what efforts are being made to tackle them. “Nyusi has grounds to claim that the war in Cabo Delgado sustains the elites’ ego, analysts say”, Voice of America, 8 June 2020.”Cabo Delgado: Al Queda, “land pirates” and corrupt military”, Plataforma, 9 June 2020.

¹⁰⁴ A close ally of President Nyusi, Correia was responsible for his 2019 election victory, is one of the most powerful men in government, and regarded as someone who is well placed to navigate the corridors of power. “Celso Correia’s power grows”, Moz24Horas, 22 July 2020.

¹⁰⁵ Cabo Ligado Weekly: 31 August – 6 September 2020.

¹⁰⁶ Sourcing more produce from the province, rather than importing from South Africa would be an obvious target.

¹⁰⁷ Recent media coverage on loan financing for the LNG project suggest that lending countries will benefit significantly more than Mozambique in terms of job creation. Joseph Hanlon, “\$5,7 bn loans to support 18,700 jobs in US, UK”, Mozambique

News Reports & Clippings 493, 2 July 2020.

¹⁰⁸ “Regional powers can help fight insurgency in northern Mozambique, experts say”, Voice of America, 28 August 2020.

¹⁰⁹ “Tanzania deploys troops at the Mozambique border”, The Citizen, 7 May 2020; “Tanzania teams up with Mozambique to contain terrorists”, 26 November 2020.

¹¹⁰ Private communication, Zimbabwean security expert, 3 February 2021.

¹¹¹ “If it’s more intelligence support, if it’s the SA Navy patrolling the coast, if it is assistance from our Defence Force, we as South Africa stand ready,” - Naledi Pandor told Parliament. Peter Fabricius, “South Africa ready to help fight Islamist insurgency”, Daily Maverick, 3 September 2020. South Africa already has an anti-piracy cooperation in agreement for the last decade which was extended for a further year in April. Cabo Ligado Monthly, July 2020.

¹¹² “Military not strong enough to intervene – experts”, DefenceWeb, 4 September 2020.

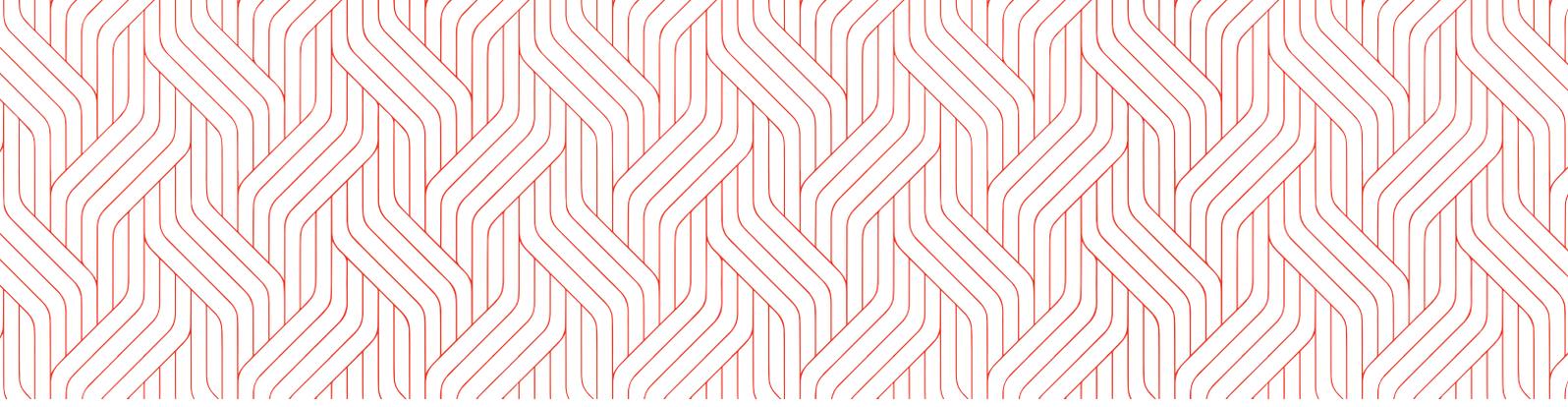
¹¹³ Helmoed Romer Heitman. “South Africa’s options for helping Mozambique fight its insurgency”, DefenceWeb, 2 September 2020.

¹¹⁴ Minister Pandor recently expressed some bewilderment at the failure of Maputo to clarify what it wants the region to do; “Pretoria puzzled by Mozambique’s silence on aid to fight Islamist insurgency”, Daily Maverick, 21 January 2021.

¹¹⁵ “Total signs new MoU with Mozambique government for LNG project security”, Zitamar News, 24 August 2020.

¹¹⁶ Faith Mabera & Sanusha Naidoo, “Entering into the fray? The extremist threat in Cabo Delgado: Strategic policy choices for South Africa and SADC”, Institute for Global Dialogue, Global Insight Issue 137, September 2020.

¹¹⁷ “‘So much trauma’: Mozambique conflict sparks mental health crisis”, The Guardian, 6 March 2021.



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