

MOZAMBIQUE 467

News reports & clippings

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Coordinated attacks as war moves south in Cabo Delgado

A series of attacks in Bilibiza, Quissanga district, Wednesday and Thursday mark an escalation of the war. Bilibiza is just 60 Km from Pemba and is the farthest south in Cabo Delgado that insurgents have hit. It was a large attack and the military did not respond. And it hit government schools linked to religious groups.

The Quissanga attacks started last Saturday in Namaluco village which is 20 km south of Macomia town. Namaluco had been attacked in June 2018. The insurgents then moved south through two other villages - Cagembe and Nagruvala (officially Nancaramo), At least two people were decapitated, one person burned to death, and many houses burned. On Wednesday they attacked Ntuare, 10 km for the administrative post of Bilibiza, and moved on to Ntessa.

That evening the insurgents reached Bilibiza, which had by then been abandoned by its residents. Bilibiza is the farthest point south that the insurgents have reached. There was no response from the military at their base in Bilibiza, because the soldiers were outnumbered by the insurgents. They sacked the market and burned houses in Bilibiza, but also attacked and did substantial damage to public facilities - the local offices, health centre, and most importantly the Agricultural Institute and teacher training college. (Carta de Mocambique 27 & 30 Jan, Lusa 30 Jan)

On Thursday morning the insurgents moved north-east and tried to enter Quissanga. Local people had already fled to Pemba and Ibo island. Bilibiza and Quissanga are strategically important. The coast road north from Pemba goes as far north as Quissanga, where the beach is the main port for traffic to Ibo. South of Quissanga is a road going inland (west) to Bilibiza, which is a bypass to the destroyed bridge across the Montepuez river.

Is there a religious tone to this attack?

In recent decades Cabo Delgado has attracted a wide range of religious missionaries. Christian fundamentalists from the US and South Africa and various Islamic group are all present, often with Mozambican government acceptance and even support. Saudi Arabia

trained Mozambicans in conservative Sunni (Wahhabi) doctrine and the Aga Khan, head of the global Ismaili Shia Muslim community, set up large development projects in Cabo Delgado to try to counter the Wahhabi influence. (Both with Mozambican government support.)

The Bilibiza agricultural institute was recently rehabilitated by the Aga Khan Development Network. The teacher training college in Bilibiza is run by ADPP, part of Tvind-Humana, seen as a cult and which has had legal run-ins with governments in various countries. In Mozambique it controls the second hand clothing trade and plays a significant role in teacher training.

One of the recruiting arguments of the insurgents is that traditional Sufi Islam leaders are aligned with Frelimo and working with it to steal the resource wealth from the people, and only a conservative Sunni government would share the wealth, create jobs, and develop Cabo Delgado. Was the attack on Bilibiza the first specific attack on high profile public institutions linked to other religions or cults?

Outsider for military

The week-long march of a large number of insurgents across parts of Cabo Delgado shows how ineffective the military has been in responding to the new civil war. Earlier this month President Nyusi nominated a total outsider as Defence Minister. The 48-year old Jaime Bessa Neto has a master's degree in environment and his career has been largely within Frelimo, as a member of parliament and in various municipal posts in Beira. He has no links to the military, and is not Makondi. He replaces the Makondi military veteran Atanasio M'tumuke.

Nyusi's power base is Makondi and in Cabo Delgado, and those groups are dominant in the army and have not done well. There seem at least three possibilities. 1. Neto is a weak appointment and the army will continue to run itself. 2. Frelimo had always opted for a weak military to prevent military coups. President Guebuza built up the military as part of his power base. Neto's appointment could mean a return to a weak army - and the war in Cabo Delgado could be run by the riot police and Minister of Interior. 3. As an experienced manager, Neto may have been put in to reorganise and clean up.

+ The death of Jose Dias dos Santos Mohamed of an illness was noted with sadness locally. An expert ranger, for a decade he was administrator of the Quirimbas National Park, and had a real impact controlling the timber and ivory trade. He developed a system of patrolling by sailboat so he would not be heard by the smugglers. A friend noted "Dr Dias was one of the few national directors who was not corrupt and was able to make a difference even under the existing corrupt systems."

Climate change adding to Cabo Delgado's woes

Torrential rains, heavier than in normal rainy seasons, have made much of Cabo Delgado impassable to vehicles. Bridges are down, including a major bridge crossing the Montepuez River on the main road from Pemba to Palma (inland from the coastal road which only goes to Quissanga). Today's forecast is for more flooding.

The only open road from Pemba to Palma and the gas developments goes the long way around via Montepuez and Mueda with more than 100 km of mud roads which have

become impassable as lorries sink into the mud. River crossing on the road are often "drifts" - low bridges which allow flood waters to flow over the road. These can be treacherous as the photo and this cellphone video show - watch the video til the end.
<http://bit.ly/319INdF>

Meanwhile, there is drought in the south and there will probably be water rationing in Maputo. This is exactly what is predicted for climate change - heavier rain in the north and drying out in the south.

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Background reading

Special reports

Mozambique heroin transit trade

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

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

Gas for development?

Gas_for_development_or_just_for_money?_2015 bit.ly/MozGasEng

Gás_para_desenvolvimento_ou_apenas_dinheiro?_2015 bit.ly/MozGasPt

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

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

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

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

\$2bn secret debt - in English

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

Kroll report summary - <http://bit.ly/Kroll-sum>

Key points of Mozambique parliament report - Nov 2016 - <http://bit.ly/MozAR-debt-En>

Following the donor-designed path to Mozambique's \$2.2 bn debt - <http://bit.ly/3WQ-hanlon>

In Portuguese:

Parliamentary Report on the Secret Debt (complete) bit.ly/MozAR-debt

Election study collaboration: We have detailed election data from 1999 through 2014 and are inviting scholars to use this data collaboratively. <http://bit.ly/MozEIData>

Election newsletters are on <http://bit.ly/2H066Kg>

Eight books by Joseph Hanlon can be downloaded, free: <http://bit.ly/Hanlon-books>

Bangladesh confronts climate change (2016)

Chickens and beer: A recipe for agricultural growth in Mozambique (2014)

Há Mais Bicicletas – mas há desenvolvimento? (2008)

Moçambique e as grandes cheias de 2000 (2001)

Paz Sem Benefício: Como o FMI Bloqueia a Reconstrução (1997)

Peace Without Profit: How the IMF Blocks Rebuilding (1996)

Mozambique: Who Calls the Shots (1991)

Mozambique: The Revolution Under Fire (1984)

Two more will be available shortly to download:

Apartheid's 2nd Front (1986)

Mozambique and the Great Flood of 2000

These are still available for sale:

Galinhas e cerveja: uma receita para o crescimento (2014) (free in English)

Zimbabwe takes back its land (2013)
Just Give Money to the Poor: The Development Revolution from the Global South (2010)
Do bicycles equal development in Mozambique? (2008) (free in Portuguese)
Beggar Your Neighbours: Apartheid Power in Southern Africa (1986)

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