

MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

474 24 March 2020 Editor: Joseph Hanlon (j.hanlon@open.ac.uk)

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Insurgents leave Mocimboa da Praia after 1 day occupation which showed local support

"Multiple photographs and videos showed militants driving around Mocimboa da Praia engaging with the local population. In addition to highlighting their mobility, this shows a level of community support not previously witnessed, with the group clearly focused on winning 'hearts and minds'," reports Control Risks (24 Mar). "Potential sympathy from the local community will bolster al-Sunnah's ability to recruit members and secure future supplies." This is reported in more detail below in an article by investigative reporters Nazira Suleimane and Estacio Valoi.

After a series of attacks close to Mocimboa da Praia over the past three weeks, up to 100 insurgents moved into the town after midnight Monday (23 Mar), apparently arriving both by sea and land. They barricaded all of the roads into town and at 04.00 began their attack, occupying the port, police station (freeing prisoners) and the military barracks, and raising their black flag. They did major damage burning cars and buildings, including two banks. They damaged the district government offices, the municipal council, the residences of the mayor and district administrator, the civil registry office and the local secondary school. Lusa published pictures supplied by residents showing burned cars and buildings, including the police station: bit.ly/Mocimboa-photos

Gunfire was heard during the day, and some reports say that the insurgents successfully held off attacks by military reinforcements. Lusa (24 Mar) reports one resident saying there were dead bodies, both military and civilian, on the streets. Other reports claim local military and police fled and there was no fighting.

During the day, the insurgents patrolled Mocimboa da Praia in small groups, fraternizing with local people and distributing food. In the late afternoon the insurgents boarded trucks and boats, saying good bye to local people, and apparently receiving applause in some places, left the town. Soldiers and police finally moved into the town this morning.

This is the "most significant attack to date" says Control Risks. "The attack underscores al-Sunnah's rapidly evolving tactics and growing willingness to engage in extended skirmishes with the security forces. ... The incident marks a significant strategic shift by al-Sunnah, involving the coordination of a large number of militants to conduct a complex attack. The militants were well armed and supplied, evidenced by their ability to hold off security forces for most of the day."

War in Cabo Delgado:

“Evildoers” had an enthusiastic farewell in Mocimboa da Praia

by Nazira Suleimane & Estacio Valoi, Moz24horas

Portuguese original on <https://www.moz24h.co.mz/post/guerra-em-cabo-delgado-malfeitores-tiveram-despedida-apoteótica-em-mocimboa-da-praia> Translation jh.



Armed Bandits being welcomed by the population of the Milamba neighbourhood near Mocimboa airport.

In Mocimboa da Praia town, the events of yesterday's attacks had a strange culmination: the enthusiastic reception of the "armed bandits" that the police, in Bernardino Rafael's choked voice, he designated “evildoers”. But the story being told in Maputo was different from that in Mocimboa da Praia, which had been taken without resistance. Indeed, many people greeted the hooded bandits, many of whom were wearing the olive green of the Mozambican army.

The bandits arrived and left Vila da Mocímboa da Praia on a high point and left of their own free will, without any confrontation with defence forces. From the beginning to the end of the takeover of Mocímboa, the defence forces were always absent according to reports from our sources.

Until 19.00 yesterday, local sources said you could only see fire, smoke, and destruction of various infrastructures and you could not see any military. "The military are not here. Where have they gone? They're not here ”

On 23 March this year, similarly to the 5 October 2017, Mocímboa da Praia is marked by destruction perpetrated by the armed bandits who are conducting a war of terror in Cabo Delgado without knowing their causes and faces. ...

According to the various sources heard by Moz24h, the bandits entered Mocímboa by sea and land at midnight and later, around 04.30, they started with the attack that lasted all day until their free and spontaneous withdrawal last night without the presence of the Defence and Security Forces (FDS). The armed bandits paraded through Mocímboa.

The only deaths according to sources, were a child, a woman and a man who were shot. But there was massive destruction of infrastructure from government institutions such as the administrator's residence, the provincial secretariat, the civil registry, the tax authority (AT) building, banks BCI, BIM, the military barracks, the port having reached its peak when the local jail moved, in addition to freeing the prisoners who were there. They just left classrooms and the hospital unharmed. They looted food and destroyed other private goods

The armed bandits' had access to everything. They strolled through the town, removing anything linked to the state, spreading their Islamic State flags, including to the defence headquarters and the district police command.

According to sources, groups of armed bandits set up barricades at all entrances to Mocímboa da Praia, ready to ambush any military reinforcements. They were positioned from the roundabout at the entrance to town from Palma, others in the neighbourhood of Nanduadua, and in the beach area from the neighbourhood of Pamunda, while others were positioned on the road from Macomia and in the Milamba neighborhood (known as Zalala).

They told the population not to leave their homes. Military men fled or stripped off their uniforms and left their weapons and without uniforms mingled with the population.

In some areas of Mocímboa da Praia the bandits distributed food to the people.

"The situation is complicated," said one source. "Supposedly the population of the town have no choice but to submit to the orders of the moment of those who were in control at the time. What will a defenceless population do, especially aware that all key positions have been occupied by the bandits, the Mozambican flag removed and that of the bandits put in its place? It is as if they were the government at that moment and the population will have to please them if they do not want to lose their lives. "

But the people of Milambo neighbourhood, near the airport, followed the bandits, applauded and even said goodbye to the bad guys who were in a truck and even shook their hands. "When they said they were leaving they said goodbye but said they are around. We also went to thank them for saving our lives. They left us stolen food, distributed it. I didn't expect to be alive because we had no protection. They didn't they wanted to kill us, because they had everything to make a great massacre, they had many weapons and machetes, and knives," another source said.

"If they are destroying things of the government and they are not killing us, we are thankful that this fight is not ours, it is theirs with the government. They should even go to Nyusi's house to fight with him and not kill us," emphasized the source.

"I was standing here, they passed, they did nothing to me. We didn't see what became of the military. You will see there on social networks that all their cars, as well as cars of some of the people here in town, were burned. Some drove cars, others took boats and simply went away. Now this is calm. They took a boat and took everything they had taken to the port. Our ministry is only prepared to harass people. It hurts me to live in this situation." ...

"They took many people. That information people still don't want to divulge but they took people."

"I am living an experience I have never seen before. They are well equipped, they kick ass," said a source. "But they came to our house to say hello to my brothers, laugh and joke. I was amazed. My adrenaline was sometimes good. There was a party, yes. People were singing, receiving food, and they accompanied the guys to say goodbye". (Moz24h)

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More attacks

Insurgents carried out two attacks last weekend in Meluco district, inland from Macomia, in Cabo Delgado. On Saturday (21 Mar) Unguia village on National Road 380 was attacked, killing one person and injuring another; huts were set on fire. On Sunday the village of Muaguide was attacked.

Meanwhile, in the northern part of Nangade district near the Tanzania border, a massive Defence and Security Forces (FDS) presence caused unrest among residents, and many fled on Saturday morning. It is reported that traders were arrested in the main market of the Nangade district town. They were suspected of helping in the logistics of the insurgents. Local people also report soldiers looting of traders' products during the hour-long operation. (*Carta de Moçambique* 24 March)

Terminology

The attackers are given a very wide variety of labels:

The police call them "evildoers" (malfeitores)

Moz24Horas has adopted the term used by the government to describe Renamo guerrillas during the 1982-92 war: "Armed bandits"

Local people call the group "Al Shabab", simply meaning "the youth", and some media use this; there is no link to Al Shabab in Somalia.

Control Risks uses "Al-Sunnah".

AIM uses a mix of "terrorists" and "insurgents"

Noticias, O Pais and *Carta de Moçambique* use both "insurgents" and "armed men".

We follow that and use "insurgents" and "armed men" as well as "guerrillas".

Note that we now consider this a "civil war" as explained in newsletter 472 (17 Mar 2020)

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64 migrants killed in Tete

A truck with a container was stopped at a weigh bridge in Mussacana, Moatize, Tete, and when opened was found to contain 64 (or, perhaps, 78) dead migrants; 14 people were still alive. The migrants are believed to be Ethiopians, being taken from Malawi through Tete on their way to South Africa. (AFP, AIM 24 Mar) People believe there are jobs in South Africa and will pay people smugglers to get them there and the route often passes through Mozambique.

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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/HeroinaPT>

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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Mozambique media websites, Portuguese:

Notícias: www.jornalnoticias.co.mz

O País: www.opais.co.mz

@Verdade: <http://www.verdade.co.mz>

Carlos Serra Diário de um sociólogo: <http://oficinadesociologia.blogspot.com>

Mozambique media websites, English:

Club of Mozambique: <http://clubofmozambique.com/>

Zitamar: <http://zitamar.com/>

Macauhub English: <http://www.macauhub.com.mo/en/>

AIM Reports: www.poptel.org.uk/mozambique-news

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