

# MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

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## Internal or external war?

Three important and contradictory reports have been published in the last ten days on the roots of the escalating war in Cabo Delgado. All three have the standing to be taken seriously - from former Security Minister Jacinto Veloso, a Rand Corporation researcher in the US, and the CMI (Chr Michelsen Institute).

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## Veloso says Cabo Delgado war is destabilisation by competing gas producers

"I am convinced that we are facing a major operation whose objective is to block the natural gas projects of Cabo Delgado," writes Jacinto Veloso in *Savana* Friday (5 June). "We are confronted with a mega-operation of destabilisation very probably directed by a competent and powerful hub located somewhere outside the country."

"We are dealing with a mega-operation conceived, directed, and executed from outside the country to, at least, slow the natural gas projects, because they are considered a serious commercial threat to the giant economic interests of big companies involved in identical projects in the region which are competing for the same markets."

He cites as a model the United States use of Islamic fundamentalists, notably Osama bin Laden, in Afghanistan from 1979 to eventually defeat the Russians. He argues that Mozambique is confronting Islamic State, not local insurgents. To respond, "prompt external help is inevitable," he argues. The *Savana* article (in Portuguese) is on <http://bit.ly/VelosoDestab>

Veloso does not say which competing gas producers are using Islamic state. The world's 8 biggest natural gas producers (in order) are USA, Russia, Iran, Qatar, Canada, China, European Union, Norway and Saudi Arabia.

**Comment:** The 83-year-old Jacinto Veloso has the standing to be taken seriously on these claims. A Portuguese air force pilot who flew his plane to Tanzania to join Frelimo in 1963, he was Security Minister (1980-83) and continued in government until 1994. He is currently a member of the government's National Defence and Security Council (CNDS). A minister during the 1982-92 war, he saw big power destabilisation first hand. He was an important back channel to apartheid South Africa and other security services, and probably retains some of those links.

And the current oil war between Saudi Arabia, Russia and the United States is real. The US promoted fracking of shale and became self-sufficient in oil and gas. There was already over-production and climate emergency concerns were curbing oil consumption. Russia refused to cut production and the Saudis hoped that by keeping up production they would bankrupt US shale producers, who are relatively expensive, and could force Russia to cut production. But Russia was also responding to US sanctions, which were partly against its oil. Prices fell from \$80 to \$20 in two

years. Covid-19 has hit the global economy, which has made the issue worse. Gas prices have also fallen, as they are indirectly linked to oil prices. And the oil price war is also linked to hot wars. The on-going war in Libya can be seen as a proxy war between Russia, Saudi Arabia, the US and other oil producers.

Veloso explicitly dismisses the idea that this is an internal war based on "local discontents", and rejects the views of journalists and academics (which includes me) who argue this is mainly a domestic insurgency. Clearly destabilisation by the security services of one of the major gas producers, using Islamic State, is possible. But it does seem a stretch to suggest that the security services of any of the gas producers want to turn Mozambique into another Libya or Afghanistan.

But it is not an either-or issue, as Veloso would have it. Veloso seems to have forgotten one of the key lessons of both of his wars - that outside intervention gains traction only through local discontents. All three of Mozambique's wars have been guerrilla wars in which the guerrillas had outside support, but that local support or at least tolerance was decisive. Frelimo moved south from Tanzania, with external support, and built on discontent with Portuguese colonial oppression - and won. Renamo with support of the US and apartheid South Africa, swept across Zambézia and Nampula because they were at least tolerated by rural communities who felt they had gained little from independence and were still poor. And in the north of Mozambique inequality has increased since then. When writing various books, people we talked to in the rural north had a common refrain - "my children may go to school, but my wallet is still empty." And they see an elite whose wallets are not empty and who appear to be growing fat.

The independence war started in Chai, Macomia district, Cabo Delgado. The new war also started in Macomia district, with discontent at growing inequality meaning that local people at least tolerate the insurgents and do not support Frelimo, increasingly seen as new colonisers.

The supreme irony is that in the same place, Frelimo is fighting the new war in the same way the Portuguese fought the war 50 years, saying it is foreign backed destabilisation that must be defeated militarily. It did not work then, and is unlikely to work now. Helicopter gunships shooting at civilians will not defeat insurgents beheading civilians. Frelimo must win back the support of local people, and that requires dealing with the grievances and inequalities - local people must see some locals gains from the gas, rubies, graphite, heavy sands and other resources.

Even if Veloso is right and this is "mega" destabilisation by gas companies and security services, they will not be defeated by mercenaries and foreign soldiers if Frelimo does not resolve the internal inequalities and grievances. *jh*

## **Rand Corp: insurgency local, despite international links**

"Despite ... purported international links, the existing evidence suggests that the insurgency should be considered primarily an outgrowth of local economic and political conditions," write Hilary Matfess and Alexander Noyes, who, like Veloso, need to be taken seriously. Matfess wrote the book *Women and the War on Boko Haram*. Noyes is a political scientist at Rand Corporation and a term member of the US Council on Foreign Relations, who, in 2015 to 2017 served as team lead in the Obama White House's Security Governance Initiative in Africa.

In their 4 June article they stress that "compared to other provinces, Cabo Delgado is impoverished and its residents lack access to health and education services. The Islamists' propaganda has capitalised on these disparities, emphasizing the insurgents' local connections."

As do many others, they stress the similarities to Boko Haram in Nigeria, and note that in an article last year they wrote "The experience of other African countries provides an instructive lesson: A hardline response that depends solely on repression will only make things worse. Mozambique needs to handle this growing security challenge in a way that will tackle the problem instead of exacerbating it with heavy-handed tactics justified as being 'tough on terrorism.' A more

comprehensive approach, which focuses on shared socioeconomic development and leverages international partnerships, would be more effective." There is a need "to fairly distribute wealth from the natural gas boom. Impoverished northern Mozambique needs development-focused efforts in particular. ... Repression will only make things worse."

Both articles are on the Rand Corporation blog <https://www.rand.org/blog.html> in short form.

The 4 June article is in the journal *World Politics Review*

<https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/28813/in-mozambique-violence-from-an-islamist-insurgency-risks-wider-unrest> The journal is rated as one of the "least biased" and "most credible" media sources by <https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/>

The 1 September 2019 article is in the Bookings Institute journal *Lawfare*:

<https://www.lawfareblog.com/counterproductive-counterinsurgency-mozambique-creating-next-boko-haram>

**Comment:** Nearly all rebellions and civil wars have outside support. Frelimo's liberation war was supported by Algeria, Tanzania and solidarity groups across the world. Renamo was supported by apartheid South Africa and, informally, the United States. That outside support shapes political ideas and military tactics. But my textbook *Civil War, Civil Peace* underlined that while nearly all civil wars have some outside involvement, they also are based on local grievances.

In wars of destabilisation, such as that waged by Renamo, and wars of liberation, as waged by Frelimo, insurgents gain acceptance by offering a solution to local grievances.

The argument between Veloso and Matfess & Noyes, between destabilisation and internal insurgency, is in part about responsibility. Is the primary cause of the Cabo Delgado war unidentified gas companies and security services destabilising Mozambique to influence the global gas markets? Or is the primary cause international gas companies and a Frelimo elite who are failing to create tens of thousands of local jobs and train people to take those jobs, to distribute the wealth from natural resources, and to control predatory corruption?

We know destabilisation was been real, from Afghanistan to Mozambique to Nicaragua. But it is also the case that calling the war "destabilisation" is in the interests of a wide range of actors, from Frelimo elites with interests in mining and corruption to governments promoting a new cold war, with communism replaced by Islam.

We also know that growing inequality and corruption are real, and that many people have turned against Frelimo because they see no gains from the minerals boom and only losses of land and jobs, while others become fat.

It does not matter if it is destabilisers or local activists who take advantage of these growing and strongly felt grievances. Military action alone is not enough. Ending the war and bringing a sustainable peace requires a serious transfer of wealth and a resolution of the grievances. *jh*

## **CMI: 'stop pursuing a military solution'**

"The Nyusi government would need to heed the call by civil society and its leaders, including those of faith-based groups, to stop pursuing a military 'solution' to the conflict and to relinquish and ban any external support, i.e. the internationalization of the war," argues a pseudonymous researcher in a paper published by CMI (Chr Michelsen Institute) on 27 May.

This provocative and thoughtful paper situates the war in historic and recent divisions. It warns that if the war continues to escalate, "The simmering political, ethnic and religious wounds, old and new, would certainly break open and not only divide Cabo Delgado, but possibly the whole country in form of a civil war."

The paper looks at a large set of complex and overlapping divisions. These include splits in the Makondes during the independence war between the military wing around generals Chipande and

Pachinuapa and the followers of Nkavandame who wanted a separate Cabo Delgado, and also between those from Muidumbe and Mueda. Another historic division is between Makonde speakers and KiMwani and Emakhua speakers. North-centre-south divisions go back centuries and continue.

More recent issues include Makonde "big men" who are seen as having become rich by gaining mining concessions by building alliances with southerners. A major recent division is between the Guebuza and Nyusi factions and the secret debt and other attempts by Guebuza to create family wealth.

There are divisions within Islam in Cabo Delgado. The CMI papers notes that "It is certainly true that the seeds of Wahabism [were] planted in Cabo Delgado, particularly in the 1980s by the Islamic Council of Mozambique (CISLAMO) and its leaders. ... There is a historical link of Wahabi-oriented CISLAMO to the business community in northern Mozambique, mostly composed of Mozambican non-African businesspeople usually of Indian or Pakistani origin, colloquially and derogatorily referred to as monhés. Many of them are intrinsically linked to and support the Frelimo party, which, even at senior leadership level not only ignores this group's involvement in illicit trade, e.g. heroin via the coast of Cabo Delgado and Nampula, but benefit directly from it."

All of those issues feed into the defence forces (FDS) which include both the police, whose riot police are doing much of the fighting and are under the Interior Ministry, and the army, under the Defence Ministry. The two halves apparently do not talk to each other and there are even divisions within the two halves.

The paper argues that the Cabo Delgado civil war fits into Prof Mary Kaldor's 2005 concept of "new wars" in which the parties gain not from victory but from the on-going fighting, though trade, taxation, gaining access to resources, and trying to settle old grudges and the multiple historic divisions.

Based on this understanding, the paper posits six scenarios, of which three are seen as "realistic and likely". They are:

- + "**Insurgents as extended arm of ISIS**". Increasingly well-trained and moving toward jihad.
- + "**Islamist inspired Mwani rebellion vs Frelimo and Makonde domination**". Moving south into Nampula along the Muslim coast, but also inland in southern Cabo Delgado and in Nampula into Emakhua speaking areas that have not traditionally supported Frelimo.
- + "**Old claimants to power and resource stakes vs newcomers' claims**". Supported by external security assistance, the Guebuza group would regain power "consolidating the rule of 'southerners' and controlling Cabo Delgado's extractive wealth under the label of national unity. "

Finally, the paper points to "the rigorously implemented government ban on any kind of investigation by national journalists and researchers, let alone by an international inquiry. Hence one of the key questions ... is, what is the government trying to hide by maintaining, even reinforcing, that ban? "

The paper is available in English on <https://bit.ly/CMICabo> and in Portuguese on <https://bit.ly/CMICaboPt>

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## Violence reporting

The growing Cabo Delgado civil war and other violence in Mozambique has led to the establishment of a new weekly report **Cabo Ligado**, The first three issues are on <http://bit.ly/CaboLigado>. Subscription is free, on <http://bit.ly/CaboSub> - go to the bottom of the form and select the Cabo Ligado option.

**Cabo Ligado** is produced for the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) by Zitamar and MediaFax in Maputo, with support from International Crisis Group and USAID.

It has the best summary of the Cabo Delgado civil war. The most recent issue details the occupation of Macomia.

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## Covid-19 cases jumping

The number of Covid-19 cases in Mozambique remains low and there have only been two deaths, but the daily reported number of cases is rising alarmingly, with 55 new cases reported Saturday 6 June. Reporting is somewhat erratic, so the graph shows a 7-day moving average (meaning that the new high point is the average of the seven days Sunday 31 May through Saturday 6 June). New cases in April (not shown) were steady and only a few each day, but from the beginning of May the cases reported daily have been increasing.



Thanks to Miguel de Brito for the data.

There is a daily updated set of data and graphs on <https://covidmoz.netlify.app/>

## Next issue

A separate bulletin later in the week will report on the insurgent occupation of Macomia last week, more on Covid-19, and other issues.

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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>

2001 first article - English and Portuguese <https://bit.ly/MozHeroin2001>

#### Gas for development?

Gas\_for\_development\_or\_just\_for\_money?\_2015 [bit.ly/MozGasEng](http://bit.ly/MozGasEng)

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

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

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

O País: [www.opais.co.mz](http://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](http://www.poptel.org.uk/mozambique-news)

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