

MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

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Exponential growth of Covid-19 threatens health service collapse

"We may be marching towards the collapse of our health system", warned the Deputy National Director of Public Health, Benigna Matsinhe, at a press conference Monday (14 Sept). After a very slow increase since the first case in March, the last two weeks have seen a jump. She said that the previous fortnight had seen:

+ 28% increase in the total number of cases

+ doubling of hospitalisations

+ a 34% increase in the total number of deaths

This is a real increase in infections, and not a mere reflection of an increase in the number of people being tested, director of surveys at the National Health Institute (INS), Sergio Chicumbe told the press conference. More than half the new cases and more than half the total cases are in the capital - Maputo city and Matola.

Mozambique's case rate is still low, with 182 cases per million population and 1 death per million. This is compared to 11,000 cases and 261 death per million in South Africa, 6,400 and 184 for Portugal, and 20,000 and 600 for both the USA and Brazil. But the sharp rise in the past two weeks has caused serious concern.

"From our epidemiological analysis, we believe we have not yet reached the peak", Chicumbe said, adding that holding back the peak is essential to reduce the pressure on the Mozambican health service.

Matsinhe warned: "We can be certain that, unless there is a radical change in behaviour by all of us, investing in prevention and in eliminating all the risk factors that contribute to the spread of the disease, then we may be marching towards the collapse of our health system".

Good agricultural season forecast for centre and north

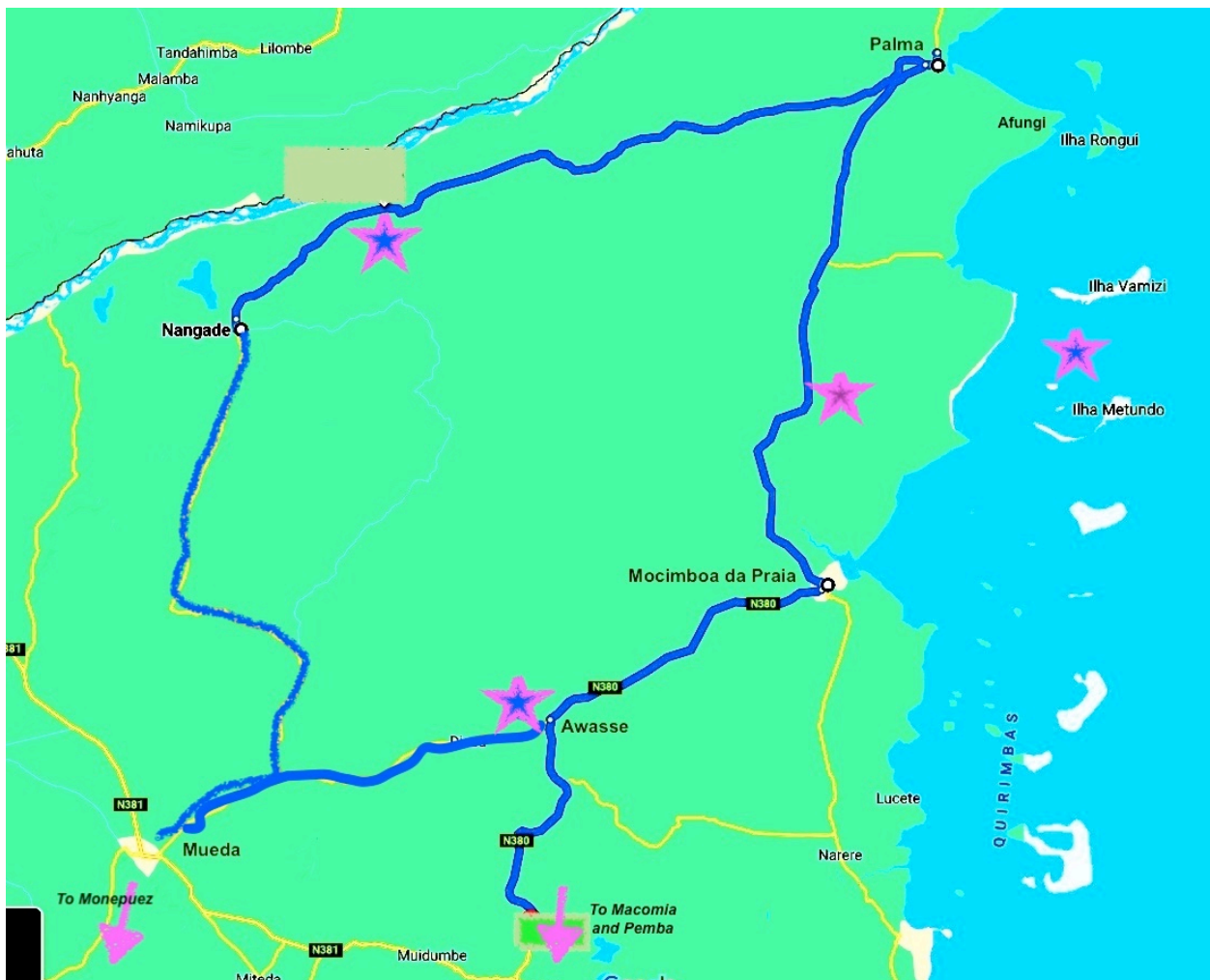
A good agricultural season is predicted for the centre and north of Mozambique, with both rains and temperatures expected to be normal to above normal, according to the National Meteorological Institute (Instituto Nacional de Meteorologia, INAM). Across the far north - Cabo Delgado and parts of Niassa and Nampula, the rains may start a bit late, but should be normal by December. <https://www.inam.gov.mz/index.php/pt/clima/previsao-sazonal>

But the south is already affected by the climate emergency, and this is predicted by scientists to be a permanent change. INAM predicts "below normal" rains in January-March and cooler than normal temperatures for Maputo province and southern parts of Inhambane and Gaza. Below historic levels is the new normal.

Cabo Delgado

Palma and Mocimboa da Praia cut off

Insurgents have cut off land access to Mocimboa da Praia and Palma and are limiting sea travel. Mocimboa da Praia and the N380 road toward Mueda and Pemba has been controlled by insurgents since 12 August. Three villages on the road from Mocimboa da Praia to Palma were attacked on 10 September; there was fighting with government forces but that road remains closed. This left only a very circuitous dirt road from Montepuez to Mueda and then via Nangade and Pundanhar to Palma, which was attacked on 11 and 12 September near Pundanhar, closing the road and cutting all road access.



On 2, 8, 9 and 11 September insurgents attacked three islands close to the coast between Palma and Mocimboa: Metundo, Quifuqui, and Vamizi. The luxury resort on Vamizi, already closed due to Covid-19, was sacked and partly burned, and 1 person was killed.. All three islands have many refugees, who were told by insurgents to go back to the mainland. The islands are 10-20 km off the coast and it appears that the insurgents want to control marine traffic between the Quirimbas islands and the coast and block sea access to Mocimboa da Praia. In keeping with this, insurgents in the past two weeks have attacked 8 villages near the coast in Macomia, Mocimboa da Praia, and Palma districts. with 6 deaths and many houses burned. And there has been an attack on a coastal village near the Afungi peninsula, where the multi-billion dollar gas liquification trains are being built.

Meanwhile the military continues to try to move to Mocimboa and there has been heavy fighting at Awasse and Manilha on the road from Mueda to Mocimboa. It is unclear if either side now controls the road. But insurgents continue to hold Mocimboa itself, which is largely destroyed and looted, as well as the port.

Amnesty alleges gruesome atrocities but government says 'fake news'

Gruesome videos have been circulated showing men in Mozambican military uniforms committing serious atrocities in Cabo Delgado. Amnesty International and Mozambican organisations have called for the incidents to be investigated. But the government denies the incidents and says the videos are faked. Their investigation is to find out who made the videos. Defence Minister Jaime Neto claimed on Wednesday (16 Sep) that some of those involved in producing the videos have been identified.

The most recent video shows soldiers chasing a naked women down a paved road, calling her Al Shabaab, the local name for the insurgents. First she is beaten with sticks, then told to run and is shot by at least four soldiers.

The video was circulated on 14 September by Human Rights Watch researcher Zenaida Machado and can still be seen on <https://twitter.com/i/status/1305433447276703744> il kanguru, a website that specialises in geo-location, places the incident in Awasse on the only paved road and says "shadows seem to indicate video is either from around beginning April or beginning September." https://twitter.com/il_kanguru/status/1305537510903349255 Amnesty's report includes photos of the location <https://bit.ly/CDg-Am2>

The video ends with the soldier doing the filming taking a proud selfie. *Carta de Moçambique* (17 Sept) identifies him as Ramiro Moisés Macatine from a 2 May picture as a soldier on his Facebook page, confirmed with friends and family. Condolence messages on 16 September on his Facebook page (still accessible) announce his death. But the identification as a serving soldier and the way he showed himself in the view as proud of what was done makes it hard for the military to deny.

Some of the earlier videos were on social media and I have seen two. One shows a man in military uniform trying to cut the head off a body already in an open mass grave. The other shows a group of loudly cheering uniformed soldiers encouraging a small group brutally beating tied up prisoners and then cutting the ear off of one. Amnesty says "videos and pictures show the attempted beheading, torture and other ill-treatment of prisoners; the dismemberment of alleged opposition fighters; possible extrajudicial executions; and the transport and discarding of a large number of corpses into apparent mass graves."

"The soldiers committing the atrocities in the videos analysed by Amnesty are wearing the uniforms of the Mozambique Armed Defense Forces (FADM) and the Mozambique Rapid Intervention Police (PIR). In several videos, the soldiers refer to their captives as Al-Shabaab, Arabic for 'the youth', a common local name for the Islamist armed group in Cabo Delgado [rather than the group of the same name in Somalia]."

"The soldiers carry older Kalashnikov rifles and wear flak jacket-style body armour, which matches that normally worn by FADM in the region. In addition, they speak Portuguese and Shangaan, a language from southern Mozambique. They also reference recent fighting in Mocimboa da Praia, making it highly likely that the videos were filmed in or near Cabo Delgado in the first half of 2020. "<https://bit.ly/CDg-Am1>

The uniforms and even equipment are Mozambican army and riot police, but this is not definitive proof. In a press statement after the Council of Ministers meeting Tuesday, Interior Minister Amade Miquidade said that insurgents are wearing government uniforms. It is a remarkable admission, because it confirms that the security forces have been corrupted to the extent that uniforms and equipment are sold to the insurgents as well as being captured in raids. For the 12 August takeover of Mocimboa da Praia, many insurgents simply walked into town in government uniforms and some with government credentials.

Government violence against civilians greater than insurgent violence in August

"Government violence against civilians, measured in fatalities, outstripped insurgent violence against civilians in August", reports *Cabo Ligado Monthly* for August (16 Sept). The most serious incident was a government 13 August attack on two boats full of displaced people fleeing the fighting; one boat was sunk killing 40.

Cabo Ligado is the joint newsletter of ACLED (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project), *MediaFax* and Zitamar. The August issue (just out) has an excellent discussion of the escalation of the war and the capture of Mocimboa da Praia. <http://bit.ly/Cabo-Aug-20>

UNDP: Economic interventions more important than military in countering terrorism

Just a month before the October 2017 start of the Cabo Delgado insurgency, UNDP issued a prescient report which, in effect, predicted the course of the war. UNDP interviewed 495 voluntary recruits to African extremist organisations. It says the "research unequivocally underscores the relevance of economic factors as drivers of recruitment. The grievances associated with growing up in contexts where multidimensional poverty is high and far deeper than national averages, with the lived reality of unemployment and underemployment, render 'economic factors' a major source of frustration identified by those who joined violent extremist groups. ... Employment is the single most frequently cited 'immediate need' faced at the time of joining."

But the research also shows that there is a "tipping point" which pushes someone to join an extremist group. "A striking 71% pointed to 'government action', including 'killing of a family member or friend' or 'arrest of a family member or friend', as the incident that prompted them to join. ... State security-actor conduct is revealed as a prominent accelerator of recruitment, rather than the reverse." It stresses that security-driven responses are often "directly counter-productive" and governments should "reassess militarized responses".

The study finds that "where there is injustice, deprivation and desperation, violent extremist ideologies present themselves as a challenge to the status quo and a form of escape." Disaffection of government is very high, as is a "belief that government only looks after the interests of a few."

This almost total distrust of government means that outside economic interventions will also not be trusted, and thus "initiatives must be spearheaded by trusted local actors."

Published just before the start of the Cabo Delgado war, it serves as an accurate prediction of what has happened. The study is based on interviews with 495 voluntary recruits, primarily with Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Kenya and Boko Haram in Nigeria.

The full report "Journey to Extremism in Africa" is on <http://bit.ly/UNDP-Extremism>. A summary "Journey of young Africans into violent extremism marked by poverty and deprivation" is on <http://bit.ly/UNDP-Pov-Extreme>

Will Total target drugs?

In direct contrast to what we argued in the previous newsletter (500, special report), *Africa Intelligence* (11 Sept) says that although the security agreement signed by Total and the government on 24 August does not mention drugs, it "will focus almost exclusively on combating heroin trafficking" because drugs are funding the insurgents.

Comment: This seems questionable, but possible. With raids 20 km and less from the Afungi peninsula where Total is building its multi-billion dollar gas liquification plant, it needs upgraded security there, and drugs are a minor problem. Also, there is no evidence that drugs are funding the insurgents. And members of the Frelimo elite are still the main beneficiaries and they would not allow any restriction on their heroin shipments coming down the coast.

However, something else may be happening here. Heroin and other illegal cargoes are carried in 15-23 metre long motorized, deep-sea going, wooden Jelbot dhows. They anchor 30-100 km offshore and transfer their cargo to small local boats which go to the coast. The war has made two changes. First, Angoche (Nampula) has now become the main heroin port. Second, as we note above, the insurgents are taking control of coastal shipping, especially between the islands and the coast. This increases the risk to the Afungi peninsula where Total is based. It also means that Frelimo has probably lost control of illegal trade north of Pemba, which can now be taxed and licensed by the insurgents.

The United States has officially stressed stopping the heroin trade. The obvious compromise to satisfy the US and Exxon Mobil is to allow the Jelbot dhows to pass unhindered offshore but to try to control the flow of boats between the islands and the coast. This would also allow Total to effectively close off waters close to Afungi and probably occupy nearby islands. *jh*

Government promising more troops to Total

Government is promising enough army special forces, naval forces and riot police to protect not just the Afungi peninsula and its LNG facilities, but also workers living in surrounding communities. The military wanted to avoid the hiring of private security companies (PSCs). But in exchange, the agreement says that if government does not provide enough good people, then Total can unilaterally end the contract and hire PSCs. Total will provide equipment, vehicles, and money (including for a salary top-up).

Total's security of Afungi is overseen by former Foreign Legionnaire Frederic Marbot, with Charles Stroeng who works for security sub-contractor Risk&Co. Marbot arrived in Cabo Delgado late last year; previously he worked for Total on security in Nigeria, where there is a similar permanent small war in coastal oil zones. (*Petroleum Economist* 4 Sept, *Africa Monitor* 3 Sept, *Africa Intelligence* 1 June)

Other reports

Mozambique's jihadists and the 'curse' of gas and rubies. BBC (18 Sept) "Mozambican troops are failing to recapture a port town from Islamist militants which is important for developing one of the largest natural gas reserves in Africa, as the country - three years into an Islamist

insurgency - becomes yet another 'resource-curse' state", writes Joseph Hanlon (editor of this newsletter) <https://bit.ly/CDg-Han>

Mozambique Can't Contain Its Insurgency Alone. Foreign Policy (US, 11 Sept). "Without a coherent counterterrorism strategy or regional assistance, the odds are stacked against the Mozambican military," writes the US journal. "Mozambique needs urgent assistance from its neighbors to stop the extremist insurgency in Cabo Delgado."

The Ignored War: Islamic State in Southern Africa? Carte Blanche on M-Net (South Africa, 16 Sept). A relatively balanced 13 minute TV report which stresses the local origins due to corruption, inequality, poverty and the failure to share resource wealth. But it goes on to argue that Islamic State, having been pushed out of areas in the Middle East where it had been strong, is using the local insurgency in Cabo Delgado to gain a foothold in Africa. And it calls for SADC and South African intervention. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jW5dwZ71NWY>

Bonomado Machude Omar ou Ibn Omar o moçambicano nas lides terroristas na carnificina de Cabo Delgado. Centro de Jornalismo Investigativo (CJI, Investigative Journalism Centre, 14 Sept, Portuguese only) An insurgent leader is identified as a local man, Ibn Omar or Bonomade Machude Omar. He completed 12th class (the highest possible and unusual in this area) at Januário Pedro secondary school, studied abroad, and returned to join a group called Africa Muslim in Pemba. <https://cjimoz.org/news/bonomado-machude-omar-ou-ibn-omar-o-mocambicano-nas-lides-terroristas-na-carnificina-de-cabo-delgado/>

Mocimboa da Praia é o distrito epicentro de recrutamento de jovens pelos Terroristas. CJI (16 Sept, Portuguese only). Interviews with local people in neighbourhoods on the edge of Mocimboa da Praia. The neighbourhood of Milamba is said to support the insurgents, who are said to effectively govern it. Insurgents patrol in government military uniforms. Insurgents are said to send money by smart phone (via MPesa) to their families. Many young people from this neighbourhood are said to have joined the insurgents. In another interview, a person who was a domestic worker in the house of a shopkeeper said that Islamic militants started coming from Somalia in 2007. <https://cjimoz.org/news/mocimboa-da-praia-e-o-distrito-epicentro-de-recrutamento-de-jovens-pelos-terroristas/>

Other news

Two journalists were attacked on Sunday night (13 Sept) according to the Mozambican chapter of the regional press freedom body, MISA (Media Institute of Southern Africa). In Maxixe Inhambane, Luciano da Conceicao, a correspondent for DW Africa, was abducted at the entrance to his house by unidentified assailants in a car without number plates. He was taken to a beach, where the kidnappers tied him up, beat him, and then left him bleeding on the sand. They stole his identity documents, two mobile phones and a tape recorder. The other journalist, in Nampula, Leonardo Gimo, a reporter for TV Sucesso, was attacked in the street by unidentified men who seized his camera. His camera contained photos of Frelimo members secretly attending a Renamo event that evening. At about 04.00 on Monday morning, the attackers rang Gimo, and told him to go the police station to retrieve his camera, and that he should delete images showing the supposed Frelimo members. He went to the police station and collected his camera, where police also advised him to delete the images of the Frelimo members, in order "to avoid problems".

Council of Ministers press conferences have stopped. Traditionally at the end of the Tuesday Council of Ministers meeting, there was a press conference with a statement of what took place, followed by questions - which were often useful to fill in details of sketchy announcements. For three weeks, this has been replaced by a filmed statement distributed to the press, with no media questions.

A kidnapped businessman paid a \$1 million ransom. Artur Magaia was kidnapped from in front of his house on 11 August, He owns a customs clearance company, Empatel. (*O País*, 16 Sept) There have been nine abductions of businessmen or their family members so far this year.

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Important external links

Cabo Delgado civil war weekly report - Zitamar, MediaFax, ACLED - <http://bit.ly/CaboLigado>

Covid-19 daily updated data and graphs <https://covidmoz.netlify.app/>

Previous editions of this newsletter: bit.ly/MozNews2020

Downloadable books: <http://bit.ly/Hanlon-books> Election data: <http://bit.ly/MozEIData>

Other Mozambique material bit.ly/mozamb

Six special reports on the Cabo Delgado war

Notes on the evolution of the Cabo Delgado war: Although the global should not be forgotten, the local is most important. 27 Feb 2020 <http://bit.ly/CDelgadoOrigins>

Religion is shaping Cabo Delgado civil war. 30 April 2020 <https://bit.ly/CDelgadoReligion>

Intensifying argument over roots of war. 28 June 2020 <https://bit.ly/Moz-492>

Are the drums of war silencing any hope of peace? 26 July 2020 <http://bit.ly/Moz-496>

A history of violence presages the insurgency. 13 August 2020 <http://bit.ly/Moz-498>

How might military & economic intervention shape the war? 3 Sept 2020

<https://bit.ly/CDelgadoIntervene>

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

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)

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

Mozambique media websites, Portuguese:

Notícias: www.jornalnoticias.co.mz

O País: www.opais.co.mz

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

Carta de Moçambique <https://cartamz.com>

Mozambique think tanks and pressure groups, Portuguese:

Centro de Integridade Pública: CIP <https://cipmoz.org/>

Observatório do Meio Rural: OMR <https://omrmz.org/>

Instituto de Estudos Sociais e Económicos: IESE <https://www.iese.ac.mz/>

Centro Para Democracia e Desenvolvimento CDD <https://cddmoz.org/>

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