

MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

522 9 February 2021

Editor: Joseph Hanlon (j.hanlon@open.ac.uk)

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New Cabo Delgado military commander dies of Covid-19

Eugênio Ussene Mussa died of Covid-19 on Monday (8 Feb). He had only been named chief of operations in Cabo Delgado in December and Chief of General Staff on 14 January. Seen as close to President Filipe Nyusi, his appointment shifted control of the defence forces from the paramilitary riot police to the army. His monumental task had been to build the army and navy into effective counter-guerrilla fighting forces, and to end the antagonism between army and police. This will require systemic solutions beyond just the change of the Chief of Staff, from training, to logistics, to intelligence and communications, to command and control.

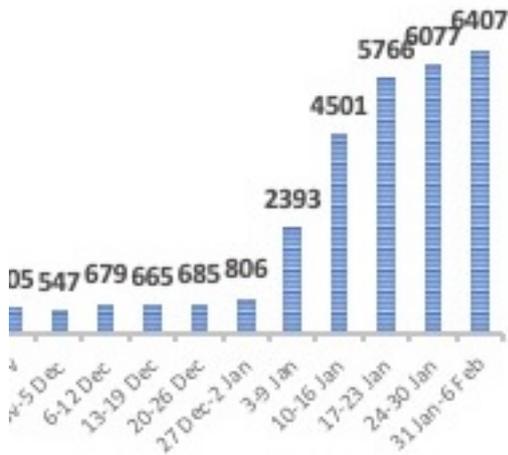
January saw more Covid-19 cases than all of 2020 and Mussa's death underlines the way the January explosion of the disease has been hitting officials and the elite. Most death notices do not cite cause of death, although the family of Francisco Pateguana noted that his death Friday (5 Feb) was due to Covid-19. Pateguana had been a deputy minister of Agriculture, governor of Gaza and Inhamane, and chair of parliamentary commissions.

The size and number of paid death notices in the *Notícias* "necrologia" section is often seen as an indication of the status of deceased members of the elite. Recently *Notícias* has had to increase the size of necrologia to a four page supplement.

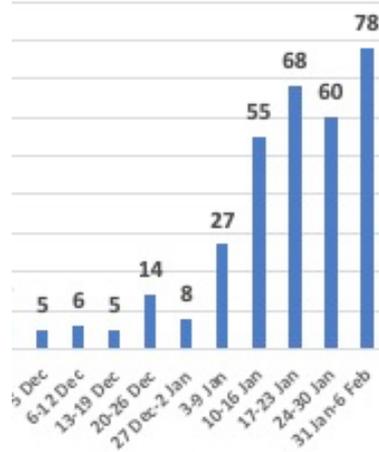
Covid-19 cases and deaths 10x December levels

Covid-19 cases and deaths continued to rise in the first week of February, and are 10 times December levels. The charts below are from Miguel de Brito <https://www.facebook.com/miguel.de.brito1> and show new cases and deaths *per week*.

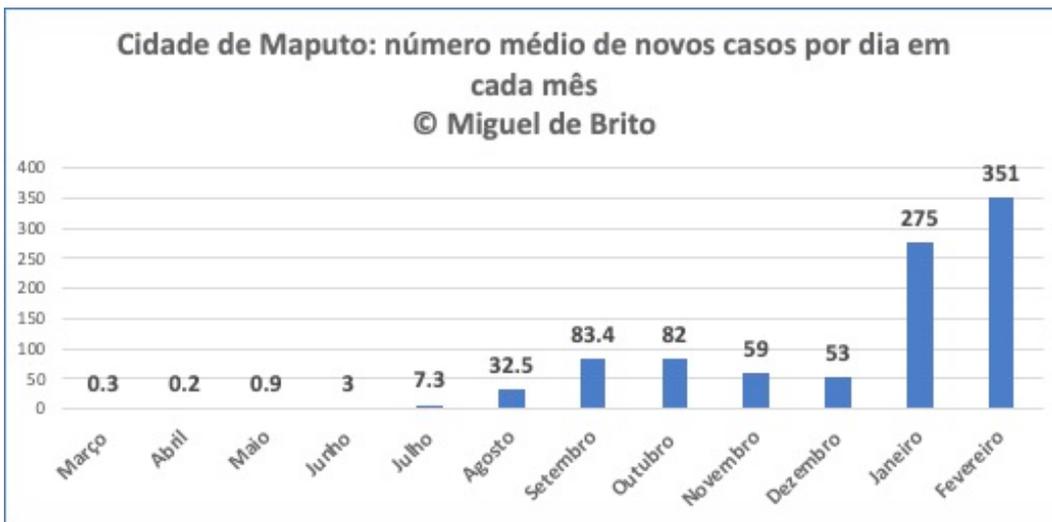
New cases per week



Deaths per week



Most Covid-19 cases and deaths are still in the Maputo metropolitan area. This chart, also from Miguel de Brito, shows the average number of new cases *per day* in Maputo in each month of the pandemic.



Covid-19 has also hit the US diplomatic mission in Maputo, with 39 cases and one death (in USAID). (*Foreign Policy* 3 Feb, *Carta de Moçambique* 5 Feb)

The deputy director of Mozambique's National Health Institute (INS), Eduardo Samo Gudo, on Monday said that the country is facing a much tougher second wave of Covid-19, which can only be reversed through tighter restrictions. The second wave is due to the failure to take preventive measures during the festive season, combined with the arrival of the new South Africa variant of Covid-19 at the same time. (Lusa 8 Feb) Economist Roberto Tibana makes the same point in his analysis of the second wave: <https://omrmz.org/omrweb/a-dinamica-da-pandemia-da-covid-19-em-mocambique/>

The full decree with the new restrictions published last week is on <http://bit.ly/Decr-2-Covid-19>

Due to the Covid-19 crisis, the health budget last year was increased from 26.7 billion meticaais to 35.4 billion meticaais - \$ 380 m to \$505 mn, partly funded by \$80 mn in extra aid. The allocation for health this year is 37.4 bn meticaais (\$497 mn) with the decrease due to the fall in rate of exchange (MT 70 = \$1 mid year 2020, MT 75.2 = \$1 now). (*Carta de Moçambique* - Ilodio Bata, 26 Jan)

The Citizen's Health Observatory (4 Feb) says that despite the extra money there is a serious shortage of personal protection equipment, and over 1,500 health professionals have been infected, 375 of them at Maputo Central Hospital (HCM).

Three week ago the National Director of Medical Care, Ussene Isse, said that private clinics that treat Covid-19 patients as well as Maputo Central Hospital had already run out of beds. "The public sector is now opening its doors to receive patients from the private sector". Isse added. He stressed that the Health Ministry is doing its utmost to avoid "disaster medicine", in which doctors must decide which patients will live and which will die. Isse said then that even the extra tent at Maputo Central Hospital is full, but were still beds available at Polana Caniço Hospital and Mavalane Hospital. (AIM, MediaFax 19 Jan) But CDD today (9 Feb) suggests that "disaster medicine" may already have happened, with triage separating out those who are unlikely to survive.

A first group of 14 Cuban health workers (5 doctors and 9 nurses) arrived in Maputo 24 January and a further 31 health professionals are due shortly. (Lusa 25 Jan)

Embarrassing correction: When I teach journalists I always tell them to check calculations such as currency conversions. Unfortunately, last week I failed to follow my own teaching and I used someone else's conversion of meticaís from a *Carta* article, and it was off by a factor of 10. The correct sentence should be:

Mozambique's middle classes rely on private hospitals, which are now full. One of the best, ICOR, told *Carta de Moçambique* (1 Feb) that when there is space, new Covid-19 patients must make a deposit of \$6,500 before admission, and in serious cases expect to pay four times that amount.

The corrected version of issue 521 is on http://bit.ly/Moz_521

Apologies. *jh*

Cabo Delgado

Food convoys reach isolated Palma

Two army convoys of 10 and 30 lorries reached Palma from Nangade Wednesday and Sunday (3,6 Feb). The road from Mueda and Nangade is the only one to Palma but it has come under repeated attacks with lorries destroyed, and has been effectively closed for nearly a month. Food was becoming scarce in Palma with prices tripling. A boat with supplies is also on the way from Pemba to Palma. (MediaFax 2, 8 Feb; *Carta de Moçambique* 5 Feb) But a truck with 10 tonnes of rice, not in the convoy, was attacked between Mueda and Nangade. (Pinnacle News 5 Feb)

Meanwhile clashes between insurgents and the military, with support from DAG helicopters, have been reported in Macomia and Muidumbe districts. But the major military push promised since before Christmas has not happened, perhaps delayed by the hospitalization and then death of head of operations Mussa.

Drug seizure shows move south to Nampula

A seizure of drugs on a beach in Nacala Porto district shows that the Cabo Delgado war has pushed the trade south to the coast of Nampula. For two decades Mozambique has been an important transit route for heroin, in effect licenced by senior figures in Frelimo. The heroin is produced in Afghanistan, taken south to the Pakistan coast, and put on dhows to be shipped to Mozambique. A dhow will carry 500 kg or more of heroin. The dhow stops 30-50 km off the coast, and the load is broken into smaller packages which are collected by local boats and dropped on the beach. The packages are collected from the beach, and taken by road to South Africa to put in containers to ship to Europe.

Until recently, the drugs were unloaded on beaches in northern Cabo Delgado. But insurgents have cut the roads south. It appears that the insurgents have not taken over the drug trade, but instead it has moved south to Nacala and Angoche. Increasingly the Mozambique part of the trade is intentionally fragmented, with boatmen and drivers receiving messages on WhatsApp or other messaging service to collect a parcel from one place and deliver it to another. They are paid but have no idea who is running the network. Another recent change in the trade is that Afghanistan is now also producing crystal meth (methamphetamine) using ephedrine which comes from a common local plant. Crystal meth has simply been added to the heroin shipments.

On 23 January police seized drugs being unloaded on the beach and arrested the man receiving the drugs; 61 kg of heroin and 5 kg of crystal meth were captured - typical of what would be carried by small boat from the offshore dhow. The man said the drugs were to be transported to South Africa by road. And he said he had been doing this business for some time. The National Criminal Investigation Service (Sernic) said local people had alerted them to strangers looking for houses to rent and strangers arriving by sea and unloading goods that were supposed to go on to Maputo, (Lusa 28 Jan, AIM 29 Jan)

Meanwhile a Pemba businessman, Minoj Hassam, was arrested on 3 February for having **180 kg of ephedrine**. His lawyer claims it was intended for using in baking cakes for one of his cafes. The lawyer claims that ephedrine is sold for baking by VIP, Recheio and Shoprite supermarkets in Maputo. [*Comment*: I can find no reference to the use of ephedrine in baking, but the process of cooking ephedrine to produce crystal meth is sometimes called "baking". *jh*] *Carta de Moçambique* (5, 8 Feb) reports that Hassam has been under investigation for some time for money laundering and smuggling. He previously worked for the Aga Khan Foundation and had been the municipal finance minister (*vereador*) in Pemba.

Cocaine has never been regulated by Frelimo, so there is a "free market" and "wild west" culture, with both growing local use and an increasing transit trade. Heroin is rarely seized because it is protected, but cocaine apparently has no such official cover. Recently five cocaine sellers were arrested in Maputo when they were caught torturing a Nigerian who was claimed to have failed to pay for 18 kg intended for South Africa. (*Carta de Moçambique* 19 Jan)

Joint maritime drug patrol

Mozambique, South Africa and Tanzania are to set up a joint maritime security body based in Maputo with technical support from the United Nations Office for Drugs and Organised Crime (UNODC), César Guedes, the UNODC representative in Maputo, told Lusa (8 Feb). The project would link the three navies to increase patrolling of the Indian Ocean coast and the Mozambique Channel. Guedes said the initiative already has a dedicated budget and is receiving financial support from Japan, the United States, France, Germany and the European Union.

But Guedes admitted to Lusa that the project has been slow to bring to fruition. The three countries signed a memorandum of cooperation in the area of maritime security in 2018, but nothing happened - Guedes says because electoral calendars in each country hindered developments.

Two questions stand out. First, to what extent will there actually be more patrols and will they also try to control the insurgency in Cabo Delgado? Second, for two decades the heroin trade has been controlled by Frelimo, so will Frelimo allow Mozambican navy patrols to go after drugs?

Major blow to cashew as Olam pulls out

Olam, the global commodities company that is the largest processor of cashew in Mozambique, announced 4 February that it is closing its cashew factory and stopping its producer support programmes. (*Carta de Moçambique*, 9 Feb) The factory employs about 3000 people at the seasonal peak.

There been a global collapse of prices and markets. There was overproduction in 2019 and many traders carried over stocks. Then Covid-19 pushed down consumption of many nuts. China and some other countries have cut imports. But Olam also cited "difficulties in obtaining raw material in the quality and volumes needed". Peasants have been growing more cashew each year, but not of high quality.

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Important external links

Covid-19 daily updated data <https://www.facebook.com/miguel.de.brito1> and <https://covid19.ins.gov.mz/documentos-em-pdf/boletins-diarios/>

Daily flood reports - <http://bit.ly/Moz-flood21>

Cyclone trackers, <https://www.cyclocane.com/> and <https://www.metoc.navy.mil/jtwc/jtwc.html>

Cabo Ligado weekly report on civil war <http://bit.ly/CaboLigado>

Previous editions of this newsletter: <http://bit.ly/MozNews2021> and bit.ly/MozNews2020

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

My Mozambique archive: <http://bit.ly/Mozamb>

Cabo Delgado

Archive with reports, detailed maps, and census data <https://bit.ly/Moz-CDg>

Special reports on the war

Evolution of the war: global vs local. 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>

Military & economic intervention. 3 Sept 2020 <https://bit.ly/CDelgadoIntervene>

Mozambique heroin transit trade

English - LSE - 2018 - <http://bit.ly/Moz-heroin>

Portuguese - CIP- 2018 - <http://bit.ly/HeroinaPT>

2001 first article- *Metical* - 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

Background reading

Special reports

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

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

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>

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

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

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>

Nine 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) is on <https://bit.ly/Chickens-Beer>

Há Mais Bicicletas – mas há desenvolvimento? (2008)

Moçambique e as grandes cheias de 2000 (2001)

Mozambique and the Great Flood of 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)

Apartheid's 2nd Front (1986) <available shortly>

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 (free): <http://clubofmozambique.com/>

Zitamar (paywall): <http://zitamar.com/>

Mozambique media websites, Portuguese (all with partial paywall):

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/> (some CDD in English)

Fórum de Monitoria do Orçamento - FMO (the main group following the \$2 bn secret debt - now run by CDD) <http://www.fmo.org.mz>

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