

MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

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Soldiers caught with money taken from Palma banks

Soldiers were caught trying to sneak out of Afungi with money stolen from the looted banks in Palma, reported *Carta de Moçambique* today (2 June), *Carta* also details the sacking of Palma by the army.

The soldiers were intercepted during the close search that tries to prevent terrorists from mixing with those fleeing Palma and joining boats to Pemba. Much of the stolen money was seized and is in the possession of senior officers, reports *Carta*, which suspects the officers will just pocket the money. (My English translation of the article is on <http://bit.ly/Moz-PalmaSack>)

In early April, after the insurgents had left Palma, the sacking of the town was carried out over ten nights. Soldiers covered their raids with all night shooting to suggest there was an insurgent attack. Private residences and businesses, including most sites of the gas contractors were looted. Motorbikes, generators, construction tools, computers, and printers were stolen, and taken to Tanzania to be sold.

Also under cover of the fake raids, the military dynamited the vaults of the Standard Bank and BCI and took all the money in Meticals and dollars. At Standard Bank the soldiers used explosives to blow up the back walls, because the vault door was too strong to open. At BCI they broke into a safe which was in the middle of the rubble. To do so, the military thieves used generators and batteries that they had stolen from a gas contractor's site. They then made off, leaving the equipment on the ground.

Comments *Carta* editor Marcelo Mosse: "The looting of Palma is a cruel consequence of the neglect and mismanagement that reigns in the Army (in the State and in the Society). An army without morals, immersed in thievery. There is no poverty that justifies this behaviour. How can we win the war with this state of affairs?"

Essential new reports

João Feijó and **Yussuf Adam** are the two best informed researchers on Cabo Delgado today. Feijó is the research coordinator of the Rural Observatory (OMR) and in April published the influential report on the insurgents as reported by kidnapped women, on <http://bit.ly/Moz-Feijo-Eng>. The second half of that study, "The Role of Women in Conflict in Cabo Delgado" has just been published.

The Portuguese news website Esquerda now publishes regular and informative interviews on Cabo Delgado. <https://www.esquerda.net/topics/cabo-delgado> Recent long interviews with Adam (English and Portuguese) and Feijó (Portuguese only) are both interesting and provide important background. Worth reading.

Insurgent name: Youth in Arabic is shabaab which is also used in Swahili so the insurgents called themselves, and were called, "al Shabaab" . Local people in Portuguese use the plural to call the insurgents **alshababs**. All three local languages - Mwani, Makonde and Makua - are Bantu languages which create plurals by adding ma in front of the word. So alshababs becomes **machababos**. Both Feijó and Adam call the insurgents machababos. (This is useful for writers because it distinguishes the insurgents from other al Shabaabs. *jh*)

Women as victims and participants

Viewing women only as passive victims of the conflict does not capture the complexity of the situation. Voluntarily or forcibly, by conviction or without alternative, by revolt or opportunism, seeking protection and economic advantages, groups of women are playing an active role in the Cabo Delgado war, participating as observers and providers of information, in providing logistical support and camouflage, as recruiters, vigilantes, and even as guerrillas, reports João Feijó in the second part of his study based on interviews with women who have escaped. "The Role of Women in Conflict in Cabo Delgado: Understanding Vicious Cycles of Violence", OR 114, in both English and in Portuguese on <https://omrmz.org/omrweb/publicacoes/or-114/>

Feijó notes that "the involvement of a large part of the civilian population with the rebel groups is particularly evident from the interviewees' information."

"Reports from residents of Mocímboa da Praia tell of different ways in which young women were involved with the rebel movement, whether in logistical and camouflage support, hiding military equipment or young rebels, or as spies and observers of the movements of the Mozambican army. There is no shortage of stories of young locals, aka 'sharpshooters,' who became involved with the military in order to gather intelligence. Particularly after the March 23, 2020 attack on Mocímboa da Praia, there were several reports of family members visiting the insurgents' bases to check on their living conditions. Other testimonies tell of local women cooking for the machababos, either voluntarily or by choice, during the March 2021 attack on Palma. On the other hand, although the majority of the armed rebels are men, there were reports of some women actively participating in the military attacks. Both in Quissanga and in Mocímboa da Praia, armed women were observed, some of them registered, sometimes assuming leadership roles, with power of decision over the future of prisoners."

But women also are significant victims - of kidnapping, rape, and, Feijó suspects, human trafficking with "many hundreds of young girls" abducted.

"Although everyone feels like a possible target of attack, the reality is that the social groups most often targeted are members of the government and economically wealthy individuals," who also have more ability to flee - can pay for transport and reach relatives in cities outside the war zone. It is the poorer women who flee into the bush with children and no food, and who suffer from the lack of health care. And women are the main farmers and have to abandon their farms when they flee.

Both Feijó and Adam (below) have interesting discussions about the role to Renamo in this part of Cabo Delgado - not as part of the war itself, but as being present since the 1982-92 war and representing an opposition to Frelimo.

Adam: Not a religious war

"A religious or ethnic connotation for this revolt is a simplifying and self-legitimising ploy by those in power," argues Yussuf Adam. "Most of the people in the insurgency are local. There are Mwanis, Macondes, Angonis, etc., involved in the insurgency. And you have Christians, Catholics, Muslims, Protestants and even animists. So this is a problem that goes far beyond any religious issue. ... Although there were social differentiations, in Cabo Delgado there was always a connection between the peoples of the coast and the people of the interior. The people from the coast went inland to sell what they produced, essentially fish and salt. And those from the interior supplied them with cereals such as corn, millet and sorghum."

But historian Adam notes that outsiders have been trying to stir religious differences since at least 1586. And the existence of Islamic groups wanting to distance themselves from the local Muslim community, and being attacked by the army, dates back to at least 1985.

Resettlement and forced displacement also has a long history, which feeds into local conflicts. Similarly "movements of extreme violence started to exist very early. Frelimo was also a movement of extreme violence. ... During the Renamo war, there was a lot of violence, by our army too. And these things that were hidden."

To stop the violence "we need to end social injustice and corruption. The 'machababos' use social inequalities to recruit. They claim that they want to distribute the income equally. And they manage to capitalize on people's discontent and revolt. ... When an army suppresses the population, it will join the others to take revenge. Right now, we are waging a war that people don't believe in. And Frelimo and the Mozambican government are losing legitimacy," Adam argues.

"If you try to fight this with repression, you are going to need more and more repression, and you are not going to get anywhere. The key at this point is that there is a permanent dialogue. It is necessary to negotiate immediately with these people. These people must be treated with respect for international human rights."

Yussuf Adam's thoughtful interview, with a historian's eye, is on <http://bit.ly/Esquerda-Adam> in English and in Portuguese on <https://www.esquerda.net/artigo/cabo-delgado-e-preciso-parar-guerra/74646>.

Feijó: Best counter-insurgency strategy is to create jobs and development

"The best counter-insurgency strategy is to create jobs and development," argues Feijó in his Esquera interview. He adds: "Social injustice is Al-Shabaab's biggest weapon. Until we resolve that, we will never resolve the conflict." (The long interview, in Portuguese only, is on <http://bit.ly/Esquerda-Feijo>)

Feijo stresses the problem is of a totally corrupted state fighting such a war. The insurgents are better organised than is generally believed. They can blend in with the population, "but they also infiltrate the police and the security forces. They have money, and the agents of the State are extremely open to corruption. It has already entered the national culture, it is a cancer that has reached gigantic dimensions."

And this is part of the roots of the war. When the gas was discovered "the north of the country was flooded by outsiders: Europeans and South Africans for gas and tourism projects. We had people

buying whole islands, beaches. There was immense pressure on the land. Civil servants in Pemba became real estate agents. Although land cannot be bought and sold, because it belongs to the State, the truth is that it was blatantly bought. The civil servants bought land at symbolic prices from the peasants and put it on the market at highly speculative prices. I saw land being bought for fifty thousand meticaís, which three years later was being sold for fifty thousand dollars. A 30-fold increase in two or three years. ... It was a real Wild West scenario."

He also notes the similarities to Frelimo during the liberation war. "The machabos use guerrilla intelligence, just as Frelimo did in Montepuez [in 1970] when General Kaúlza [de Arriaga] organised the large Operation Gordian Knot. But the guerrillas had completely infiltrated. The population saw everything and told Frelimo. Operation Gordian Knot failed because it had no surprise effect. It is the same here. Government forces are highly infiltrated."

Feijó makes a number of other points:

After the liberation war "the north fell into oblivion, despite being the origin of the country's elite, because the elites moved to Maputo, which is a nice colonial city built for settlers. Mozambique became very 'Maputised'." There were gains for the Makondes initially, including widely distributed veterans pensions. "The Makondes are very hierarchical societies. We have Chipandes, Pachinuapas, who own large plots of land and mining operations. But there are poor people among the Macondes and the younger Makondes do not have access to these subsidies and have no other alternative for the future, no prospects. ... Within the groups of machababos all languages are heard. There are Makondes in the middle. And there are people who are not Islamic, or at least who don't pray. They are only there in revolt, or for opportunism, to steal and plunder things, for the money they receive."

The whole economy became extractive - timber, hunting, precious stones. "There was no law. Whoever had power at the moment was the law." It was an illegal cash economy in which some people became rich and in which a lot of jobs were created. When Nyusi became president he tried to crack down, Many people lost their incomes in the brutal police crackdowns. Mwanis who spoke Swahili were labelled as Tanzanians and sent across the border.

"Then along came this group, with money, used to fund the young people's studies and the creation of their small businesses, the building of mosques, and that was implemented with the cell model. They managed to exploit very well the idea of local poverty, inequality, abandonment by the State and social injustice. The idea of a State that is at the service of opportunists. And they also have the idea that democracy generates social chaos. This discourse has long been held that democracy generates all this confusion, because it generates poverty, injustice, corruption, feeds prostitution and undermines family values. The machababos present themselves to young people with a very seductive discourse: that of equality, justice and order. A young person who has no prospects for the future is taken in by this."

"Complaints of abuses by the military were prevalent. They extorted money from the population; blackmailed people, accused them of being Al-Shabaab and demanded money. People were almost as afraid of the military as of Al-Shabaab." But the soldiers are "underpaid and demotivated, lacking capacity and under stress. ... These soldiers are victims of bad commanders, of individuals who are making a business out of war."

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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)
Beggars 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)
Also CDD now controls Fórum de Monitoria do Orçamento - FMO (main debt group) <http://www.fmo.org.mz>
and RMDDH - Rede Moçambicana dos Defensores dos Direitos Humanos (a human rights group).
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