

MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

632 4 January 2024 Editor: Joseph Hanlon (j.hanlon@open.ac.uk)

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Editor's note:

Elections taking priority

- but are they intentionally discredited?

This newsletter is a personal project of Joseph Hanlon, as time permits, and it is much more irregular during electoral periods. This will continue until after the national elections on 9 October.

Mozambicans will be among 2 billion people in the world with a right to vote this year, and questions are being raised about democracy in many countries from the United States to Bangladesh. Writing in [The Guardian](#) (3 Jan) Rafael Behr notes that "Tyrants don't manipulate elections to trick their subjects into thinking they have a choice of ruler. They do it to demonstrate the futility of expecting change. It is an assertion of power by demoralisation. The choreographed rallies, puppet rivals and Potemkin village polling stations are not subtle counterfeits designed to be mistaken for the genuine article. They are deliberately crass – a sneering mimicry that rubs people's noses in the artifice of politics. The point is to discredit the idea that elections make a difference."

That sounds very much like Mozambique, and its municipal elections last year - intentionally discrediting the idea that elections make a difference

The Swedish Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project calls Mozambique an "electoral autocracy" with the same ranking as Zimbabwe. Other neighbours South Africa, Zambia and Malawi have the higher status of "electoral democracies".

We will publish *Mozambique News Reports and Clippings* irregularly as time allows. It looks like this will be a busy year. Joseph Hanlon

Daily flood bulletins available

The excellent daily rainfall, river level and flood bulletin published by the Direcção Nacional de Gestão de Recursos Hídricos is not posted on a website, so, as in past years, I am posting it on

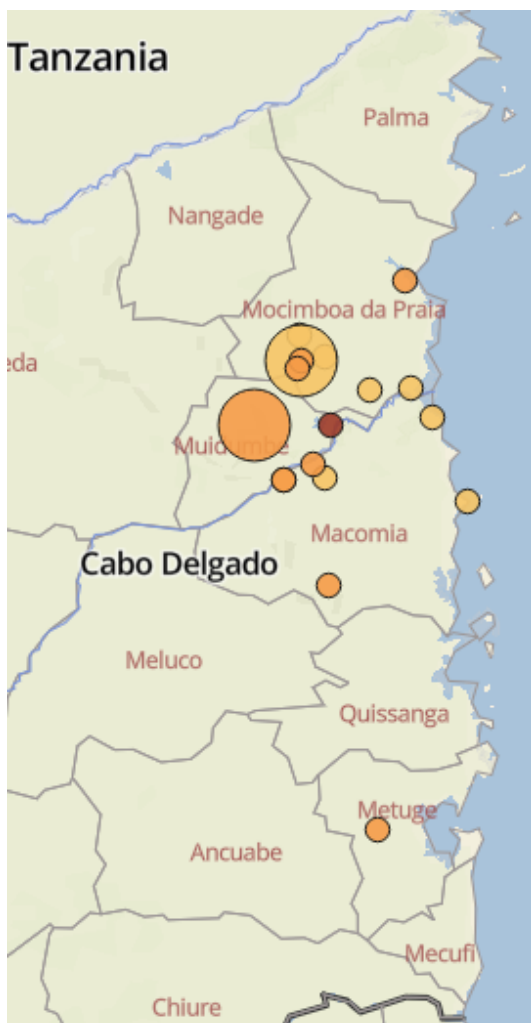
<https://bit.ly/Moz-Flood-2024>. The first flooding of the season was on the Incomati river which closed some roads and bridges near Magude on Tuesday. So far, all other rivers are below flood alert level but they are following the normal rising pattern which usually leads to flooding in January and February.

The Cabo Delgado civil war continues

"Over the course of 2023, security was consolidated around the large perimeter of Afungi, the epicentre of one of the region's largest economic projects. Despite the weakening of the rebel group, armed groups continue to circulate south of Mocímboa da Praia, maintaining pressure on the Afungi project, while threatening north-south road traffic in the province, destabilising returning populations," writes João Feijo of the Rural Observatory (OMR). (In English: <https://bit.ly/OMR-DR260-ENG>) This is the best current summary of the state of the war, and of returning displaced people.

In broad terms, the military response has been partly effective. Rwandan troops are in complete control of the gas zone - Palma district and the northern half of Mocimboa da Praia. Tanzanian troops seem to have pushed insurgents out of Nagade district. And Mozambican police and soldiers and local militias seem to be restricting insurgent movement in the south and west. The number of internally displaced people has fallen from 1 million to 600,000

This map, from *Cabo Ligado* 159 (13 Dec), shows all attacks and military confrontations in October, November and the first week of December. Bigger circles are several attacks.



Insurgents are maintaining control of two corridors, along the Messalo River which is the northern border of Macomia district, and the coast and coastal waters of Macomia district. The small dark dot is Chai, a town near the river crossing on the N380, the main north-south road, where insurgents are trying to maintain control. Chai has always been strategic and it was where Frelimo fired the first shots of the independence war. From Chai and the river insurgents move north into parts of Mocimboa da Praia and west into Muidumbe district. Some attacks are on civilians and there have been several attacks on the Mozambican military, with soldiers killed.

Focus Group's Situation Report for 11 December-3 January cites attacks and fighting throughout this area, with roadblocks or attacks the N380 and on the coast road in Macomia. Some attacks are just to take food from villages. The report concludes that "the risk of insurgent attacks in the districts of Macomia, Mocimboa da Praia and Muidumbe remains very high."

Meanwhile, TotalEnergies for the past year has been steadily rebuilding its facilities on the Afungi peninsula, directly supporting local development projects, and assisting with the slow return of local officials and health and education workers. It has still not withdrawn the *force majeure* declared 26 April 2021 after the insurgent occupation of Palma, so there is no formal restart of the gas project yet. It appears TotalEnergies has been waiting for three things. The first in converting Palma

and the north of Mocimboa da Praia into a "Totalandia" - a new colonial enclave run by TotalEnergies and with Rwandan forces providing security. The second was waiting to be sure that COP28 abandoned the 1.5° global heating target and thus ensured a market for the gas. The third was to force contractors to accept their old contract prices and not demand increases due to inflation. It appears all three goals have been met, so a formal go-ahead is expected.

Cholera riots and the rage of the poor

At least five community leaders and health workers have been killed and 26 injured, accused of spreading cholera, in riots in 11 districts in Cabo Delgado, Nampula and Zambézia, police chief Bernardino Rafael said in a public meeting in Chiure, Cabo Delgado on 27 December. *MediaFax* (19 November) reports that Naparama militia members, who are supposed to be fighting against insurgents, joined community members in attacking the community leaders. Cholera riots have a long history, but in and near Cabo Delgado they tell us something important about the ongoing war. And the police chief's presence in Chiure shows the level of concern at national level.

In the current outbreak, there have been more than 38,000 cholera cases and 150 deaths, according to the Ministry of Health. Cases are mostly in Nampula, Zambezia and Tete, but increasingly in Cabo Delgado.

Back in 2001 following similar cholera riots in the same area, there was a major research project led by the late Carlos Serra and a team from Universidade Eduardo Mondlane. Researchers were shocked to find that in northern Mozambique poor people strongly believe that the rich and powerful want to kill them, and thus feel they were fighting for their lives. It was more than simply the better off exploiting them, A common comment was "they want us dead", or to drink our blood or steal our organs. People did not believe that health workers were really willing to help them for free, and could not believe they were putting chlorine in water to prevent cholera; they must be infecting the water. People believe they are fighting for their lives and their families. (Portuguese with English preface, on <https://bit.ly/SerraCol>) And it is happening again.

These attitudes had a direct role in the start of the civil war in Cabo Delgado. It was argued that the Frelimo elite was stealing the resource wealth, notably from gas and rubies, and not sharing it local people or using it to create jobs. As people were pushed off land, it seemed a manifestation of the elite taking their livelihoods and wanting them dead. Many of the attacks by the insurgents have been on community leaders.

Chiure is a particularly sensitive town in Cabo Delgado, just south of the war area. It was the only town in Cabo Delgado that had elected a Renamo town council. In the 11 October municipal elections, a parallel count showed Renamo had been re-elected, but the district elections commission gave the victory to Frelimo. In the demonstrations that followed, police shot and killed one person - again showing "they want us dead". The establishment panicked and the Constitutional Council gave Chiure town council back to Renamo. But the national police chief's visit to this small Cabo Delgado town is a reminder that the government is worried about the war spreading.

Will Mozambique profit from COP28 and gas?

COP 28 in Dubai effectively accepted the gas and oil companies target of global warming more than 2°C above preindustrial levels, instead of the 1.5°C agreed at COP21 in Paris in 2016. Half a degree may seem small, but it makes a major difference for Mozambique.

Mozambique's gas project assumes major gas sales for 30 years, which, because of delays, is up to 2055. The Paris 1.5°C would mean no new gas fields can be developed and definitely would mean TotalEnergies would not be able to sell all of Mozambique's gas. But 2°C would mean selling gas until 2045 and 2.5°C would mean selling the entire gas field.

The difference for Mozambique is huge, but not immediate. For the next 15 years, mean temperature will go up about 0.6°C, from 24.6°C to 25.2°C no matter what target is set now. But the CO₂ and methane emitted in the next 15 years will determine what happens then. If the oil and gas companies have their way, Mozambique's mean temperature would go up to 28°C or 29°C late in the century. This would cause draught, heat, cyclones, floods and massive destruction. But just the 0.6°C increase that it is too late to stop will cause huge damage in the next 15 years.

The 2018 government projection was more than \$2 bn per year for at least 15 years, so 2°C or 2.5°C is means tens of billions of dollars. But that is only from 2036. Before that, revenue is small. On 1 December 2023 the World Bank issued its *Mozambique Country Climate and Development Report* which "estimates that the level of investment needed by 2030 to achieve climate resilience of human, physical and natural capital amounts to US\$ 37.2 billion." This is for roads, improved buildings, better agriculture, irrigation, and coping with sea level rise and stronger cyclones. Roughly half of the money Mozambique expects to gain from the gas in 30 years has to be spent now to cope with the damage already done to the climate. And the rest will have to be spent to clean up the mess Mozambique is helping to create.

But on 13 December another report was published which shows Mozambique will never actually get that much money. The report for the International Institute for Sustainable Development in Canada concludes that "The LNG deals are structured so that most of the revenue for Mozambique comes in the mid-2030s and 2040s and is subject to how the international LNG market develops, transferring risk to the state. The gas extraction consortiums also avoid paying withholding taxes on dividends or interest. Mozambique has very limited value chain participation, so while foreign companies make money at all the stages, Mozambique does not."

So Mozambique needs \$37.2bn in the next decade to deal with climate, before there is any significant revenue. And if the gas revenue does come, it will have to be spent on the increased damage done by the increase in global warming caused by increased gas production. This is beginning to sound like a very bad deal, and Mozambique would be better investing in local industrial and energy projects likely to be profitable in less than a decade.

Three reports are cited:

"[Mozambique - Country Climate and Development Report \(English\)](#)", 1 December 2023, World Bank.

"[Disaster risk profile - Mozambique](#)", 11 July 2019, World Bank.

"[Navigating Decisions: The risks to Mozambique from liquified natural gas export projects](#)", by Richard Halsey, Richard Bridle, Bathandwa Vazi, Anna Geddes; International Institute for Sustainable Development, 13 December 2023.

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"Mozambique News Reports & Clippings, number XXX", DATE, bit.ly/Mozamb, accessed XXX.

Elections

CIP Mozambique Elections Bulletin is published by Centro de Integridade Pública (CIP)

<https://www.cipmoz.org>; <https://cipeleicoes.org/eng/cip@cipmoz.org>).

To subscribe or unsubscribe: <https://bit.ly/MozBul-sub> Past election newsletters are on <https://bit.ly/CIP-EI>

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 data: <http://bit.ly/MozEIData>

Important external links

Books by Joseph Hanlon can be downloaded, free: <https://bit.ly/HanlonBooks>

Flood, cyclone and weather: weather <https://www.inam.gov.mz/>

rainfall https://www.inam.gov.mz/images/DAPT_Previsoes/Manha/Previsao_Manha.pdf

Daily flood and monthly dry season reports - <https://bit.ly/Moz-Flood-2024>
Cyclone trackers, <https://bit.ly/Reunion-cyclone>, <https://www.metoc.navy.mil/jtwc/jtwc.html>
(which uses z time which is UCT - Coordinated Universal Time) and <https://www.cyclocane.com/>
Two LSE working papers - World Bank questions its Mozambique 'success' where oligarchs brought high inequality, poverty and corruption - <https://bit.ly/Moz-LSE-208c> and **How the IMF and World Bank caused a resource curse and civil war in Mozambique** - <https://bit.ly/Moz-LSE-209>
Minimum wage & exchange rate charts, tables 1996-2022 <https://bit.ly/MozMinWage2022>
Previous editions of this newsletter: <https://bit.ly/MozNews2023> and <https://bit.ly/MozNews2022>
My Mozambique archive: <http://bit.ly/Mozamb>

Cabo Delgado

Cabo Ligado weekly report on civil war <https://www.caboligado.com/>
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>
Cabo-Delgado-Free-for-all. 20 Apr 2022. <https://bit.ly/Moz-593>

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

\$2bn secret debt - in English

Secret debt trial (Aug-Oct 2021) press reports <https://bit.ly/Moz-secret-debt>
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>

Eleven books by Joseph Hanlon can be downloaded, free: <https://bit.ly/HanlonBooks>

Zimbabwe takes back its land (2013) <https://bit.ly/Zim-takes-land>
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)
Civil War Civil Peace (2006): <https://bit.ly/Civil-War-Civil-Peace>
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) <https://bit.ly/Peace-wo-Profit>
Mozambique: Who Calls the Shots (1991) <https://bit.ly/Shots-Moz>
Mozambique: The Revolution Under Fire (1984)

These are still available for sale:

Galinhas e cerveja: uma receita para o crescimento (2014) (free in English)

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)

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).

To subscribe to all CDD publications: <http://eepurl.com/gO9l6v> (English or Portuguese).

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