

Cabo Ligado



CONFLICT OBSERVATORY

Anadolu/Getty Images

18 June 2025

Update covering:
2 - 15 June 2025



Cabo Ligado – or ‘connected cape’ – is a Mozambique conflict observatory launched by ACLED, Zitamar News, and MediaFAX.

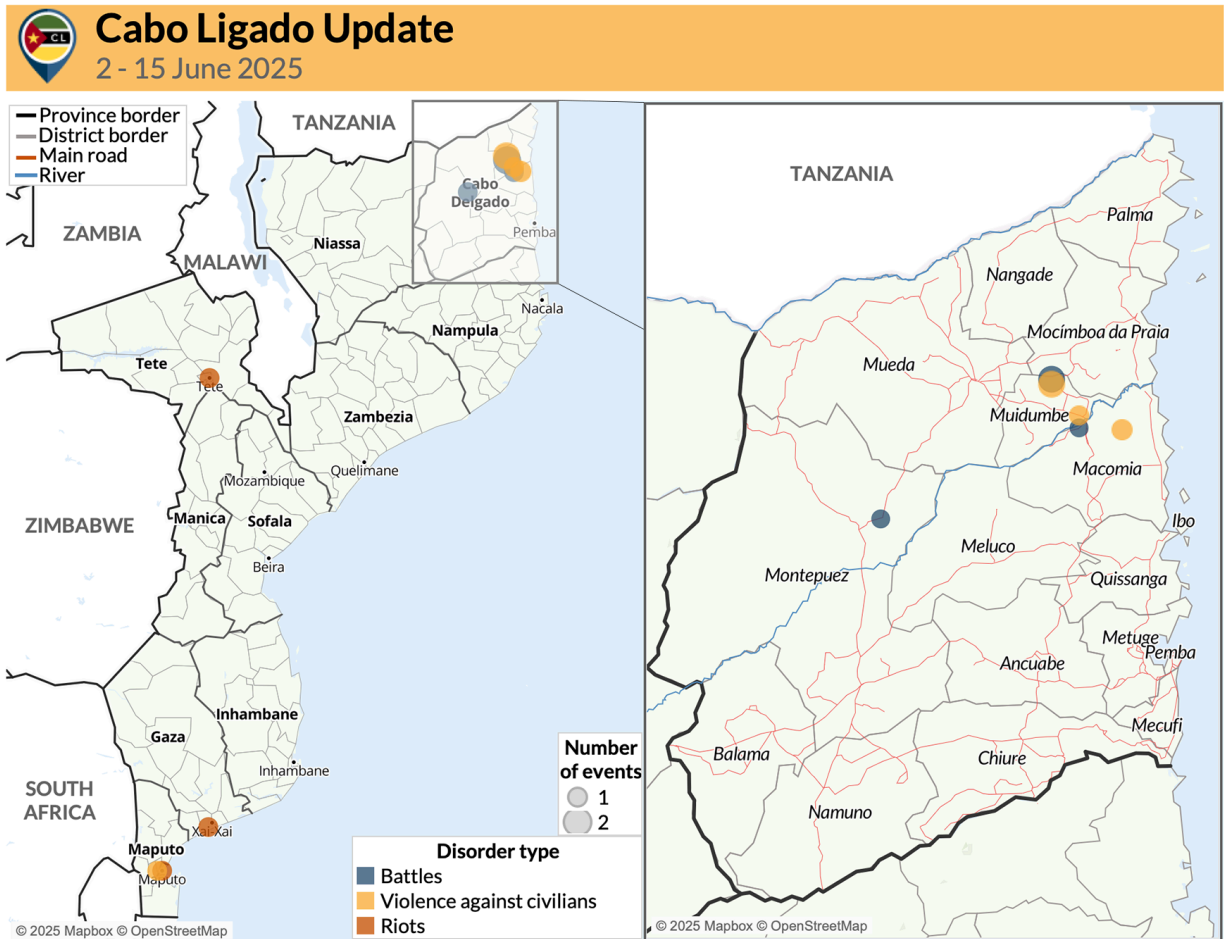
By the Numbers

Data highlights in Cabo Delgado province (2-15 June 2025)

- At least **8** political violence events (**2,096** in total since 1 October 2017)
- At least **18** reported fatalities from political violence (**6,038** since 1 October 2017)
- **0** reported civilian fatalities (**2,509** since 1 October 2017)
- At least **8** political violence events involving ISM across Mozambique (**1,928** since 1 October 2017)

Overview

The Defense Armed Forces of Mozambique (FADM) killed at least 12 Islamic State Mozambique (ISM) fighters returning from Niassa province in a clash in Montepuez district at the start of the month. The survivors continued their trek, arriving in Meluco district in the following days. Elsewhere, ISM was involved in clashes with the Local Force in Muidumbe district and FADM in Macomia district. Despite ISM losses, the group’s targeting of civilians remains persistent, with up to six abducted in northern Muidumbe district, while at least one Local Force soldier was killed in an attack in the south of the district.



NOTE: Events after 13 June will be available in the next reporting period

Situation Summary

ISM fighters returning from Niassa province suffered a significant blow on 3 June, losing at least 12 fighters in a FADM ambush. According to a local source, the group had crossed the R698 road between Nairoto and Ntele, and stopped for food near the Messalo river when FADM attacked. The ambush took place not far from Gemfields' Nairoto gold project.

Despite the attack, ISM fighters managed to escape. According to the same local source, the surviving fighters, some of whom were foreigners, suffered some injuries but made their way eastward to Minhanha in Meluco district, where Cabo Ligado understands they remain. Insurgents have been seen frequently in this area, and in particular around the [Ravia gold mine](#), since the start of the year, prompting speculation that this is the site of a new base.

In northern Muidumbe district, ISM targeted Magaia village between 6 and 8 June, abducting civilians for ransom, destroying property, and clashing with the Local Force. On 6 June, insurgents captured up to six people in fields near the village and forced them to call their families for ransom

payments, leading to the release of at least five. On 7 June, the insurgents entered the village, burning houses and looting military equipment, but were repelled by the Local Force. Fighting continued the following day, which resulted in at least one member of the Local Force being killed. Through its propaganda channels, the Islamic State (IS) claimed it killed two, while local sources suggested that insurgents also suffered casualties, but could not confirm a number.

On 4 June, farmers in the village of Novo Cabo Delgado near the south bank of the Messalo river abandoned their fields after seeing insurgents in the area, news agency [Lusa](#) reported. On the evening of 12 June, insurgents attacked the village of Miangalewa in Muidumbe, just north of the Messalo river and less than 6 kilometers from Novo Cabo Delgado, killing one person and, according to IS social media, stealing two motorbikes. Heavy gunfire was reported in the area that night.

IS also claimed it killed a soldier in an attack on an army camp in Catupa village in Macomia district on 14 June, but Cabo Ligado could not identify the exact location. Another source in the province reported two clashes in the area the previous week, which could not be confirmed, suggesting that clashes are ongoing in the area.

Focus:

Return to Mucojo

One of the more striking findings of the International Organisation for Migration's [most recent survey](#) of displacement and return in Cabo Delgado is the considerable fall in the number of displaced people in Macomia district headquarters. The survey, conducted over February and March this year, showed 45,686 displaced people were living in the town. This is down by over one-third from the 71,664 [recorded](#) in May and June 2024.

Many of those who left have gone to Mucojo on Macomia's coast. In early May, a [multisectoral humanitarian assessment](#) found 16,600 returnees in Mucojo. Most cited lack of food and public services as the reason for return. Yet things are not much better in Mucojo. Health and education services are not operating, while there is just one shop in the village.

The stark conditions facing returnees suggest that return may not be wholly voluntary in all cases. In late 2022, when people began returning to Mocímboa da Praia, there was [some evidence of incentives](#) driving this, as well as the poor living conditions in displacement camps. In late 2024, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Paula Gaviria Betancur [noted](#) that local authorities at times pressured people to return through the promise of assistance or misrepresenting conditions in their place of origin.

In contrast to the lack of public services, security conditions on the coast, and in Mucojo in particular are, on the face of it, conducive to return. There is now a permanent presence and regular patrolling of FADM and Rwandan forces in the Mucojo and Quiterajo Administrative Posts. Both political violence and other actions by ISM have been declining in both areas in recent

months, likely in response to their deployment. ACLED records no ISM attacks in the Mucojo Administrative Post since the hijacking of four fishing boats at Pangane on 21 March. However, one local source reports continued ISM presence in the area, particularly around Pangane, where the group was [most recently seen](#) on 14 June.

Returnees will therefore face difficulty not only in reestablishing livelihoods in the absence of basic services, but also in navigating a complex security environment. They will need to maintain relations with state forces while insurgents, many with roots in the area, seek to maintain some freedom of movement.

Roundup

TotalEnergies suspends road access to its LNG site

According to Africa Intelligence, TotalEnergies has significantly increased security at the Afungi liquefied natural gas site. The publication [reports](#) that contractors were informed at a 27 May meeting that access to the site by road was suspended, and that future access would be by air and sea only. TotalEnergies' suspension of road access had previously been [reported](#) by Maputo newspaper Savana on 30 May.

The introduction of heightened security measures came soon after TotalEnergies CEO Patrick Pouyanné [expressed satisfaction](#) with security in northern Mozambique. Speaking on 20 May, he said that the security situation had improved, and that force majeure would be lifted by the middle of the year. Since these latest measures were introduced, the Financial Times [reports](#) that the UK's export credit agency, UK Export Finance, is assessing past human rights abuses associated with project security, and measures in place to prevent a recurrence.

FADM expels 31 soldiers for disciplinary offences

The General Staff of FADM has ordered the expulsion of 31 military personnel, including sergeants, corporals, and private soldiers, for disciplinary offences including unauthorised absence, disobeying orders, and indiscipline, according to the news site [Integrity Magazine](#). Integrity Magazine quotes an order dated 23 May and signed by the new chief of staff of FADM, Júlio dos Santos Jane. The expulsions are in line with [concerns about corruption](#) in the Defense and Security Forces that President Daniel Chapo laid out at the swearing-in of General Jane in April.

UIR reconnaissance chief shot dead in Maputo

The head of reconnaissance for the police rapid intervention unit (UIR) was [shot dead](#) in his vehicle in the Nkobe area of Maputo province on the night of 11 June by unidentified gunmen. He was driving in a Mahindra vehicle used by security forces when around 30 shots were fired at him at point-blank range, a police spokesperson said.