



28 November 2024

Cabo Ligado Update: 11–24 November 2024

[Cabo Ligado](#) – or ‘connected cape’ – is a Mozambique conflict observatory launched by ACLED, Zitamar News, and MediaFax.

BY THE NUMBERS

Cabo Delgado, October 2017–November 2024

- Total number of political violence events: 1,963
- Total number of reported fatalities from political violence: 5,877
- Total number of reported fatalities from political violence targeting civilians: 2,433

All ACLED data are available for download via the [data export tool](#) and [curated data files](#).

SITUATION SUMMARY

Clashes between Islamic State Mozambique (ISM) and state forces have continued in Macomia district. However, over the past two weeks, groups of ISM fighters have broken out of Macomia, carrying out attacks against civilians and local militia forces in the southern districts of Ancuabe and Chiúre, and appearing as far south as Eráti district in Nampual province. The re-emergence of the Naparama militia, which unsuccessfully tried to confront ISM in Ancuabe, is a significant new development that complicates issues for the Defense Armed Forces of Mozambique (FADM), and the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) which is stationed there. ISM’s presence sparked the displacement of over 14,000 people in Ancuabe and Chiúre

In Macomia district, local sources reported a clash between ISM insurgents and the RDF around Mucojo on the Macomia coast on 13 November, but no details could be established. The following day, Islamic State (IS) claimed through its social media channels to have killed two Rwandan soldiers in battle around the village of Namaneco, north of Mucojo. These fatalities have not been independently verified, and IS has often confused Rwandans and the Mozambican Quick Reaction Force, which uses similar uniforms.

Also on 13 November, a large group of Mozambican soldiers arrived in Macomia town, having [withdrawn](#) from the coastal village of Quiterajo more than 60 km away. Quiterajo has been contested territory since the start of the security forces’ Macomia offensive at the end of July. Local sources reported that many soldiers arrived on foot having abandoned Quiterajo due to a lack of food, ammunition, and basic supplies. One anonymous military source cited by [MZNNews](#) denied that any soldiers had deserted from Mucojo just south of Quiterajo, though made no reference to Quiterajo itself.

Two reports suggest that state forces are keen to demonstrate progress in Macomia. [Integrity Magazine](#), citing military sources, reported that Mozambican forces reoccupied Quiterajo on the afternoon of 17

November but this has not been corroborated by Cabo Ligado sources. The area has clearly not yet been completely secured as IS claimed on 25 November to have detonated an IED on a Mozambican army patrol around the village of Unidade, outside Quiterajo, without providing a date for the incident. Meanwhile, on 23 November, Rwanda's defense ministry issued a [statement](#) on 23 November reporting that the RDF commander in Cabo Delgado, Major General Emmy Ruvusha, and FADM's Chief of General Staff Admiral Joaquim Mangrassa, visited Mucojo recently. The statement said the town had been "recently liberated" and the two commanders met to discuss the security situation on the coast.

Some insurgents also remain around the Messalo river. The village of Novo Cabo Delgado in northern Macomia, west of the N380 highway, was burned and looted on 21 November, one local source reported.

In the south of the province, there were at least 19 fatalities in ISM attacks in Ancuabe district, the first time the group has been active there since May. In Nacuale, west of Ancuabe town, IS said it killed 12 members of the Mozambican militia, referring to the Naparama. Other sources report varying casualty estimates, but all are in the region of IS's claim. IS also published photos of several of the Naparama killed in the attack. In Nanao, just north of Ancuabe town, IS claimed to have killed six Naparama. A local source confirmed the clash but reported that only two had been killed.

Insurgents remained in the area to the west of Ancuabe in the following two days but reports were conflicting in detail. IS claimed to have killed one person on 18 November in the village of Nacololo in Ancuabe, just north of the N1 highway connecting Montepuez and Pemba. One source reported a clash between the Local Force and insurgents in the nearby village of Mbonge on 19 November. Further east along the N1, one source claimed that insurgents kidnapped two people from the village of Nangume, just north of Silva Macua. On 18 November, insurgents reportedly kidnapped two people from the village of Nangume, just north of the Silva Macua junction, while they were out hunting, according to one local source.

Amid the outbreak of militant activity in Ancuabe, the Naparama militia detained at least 30 Mozambican soldiers around the village of Nanjua on 17 November, suspecting them of being insurgents. A video circulating online shows the Naparama parading the troops down through the village. One source claimed the issue was resolved and the troops allowed to continue following a meeting between military commanders and Naparama leaders.

After attacking Ancuabe, insurgents moved further south. On 19 November, insurgents were spotted in the vicinity of the villages of Napala and Ntonhane in Chiúre district, causing locals to flee. The following day, insurgents were reportedly seen in Olinepa in the Eráti district of Nampula province, just south of the Lúrio river. This marks the first reported insurgent incursion in Nampula since April.

On 22 November, back in Cabo Delgado, insurgents killed one person in the village of Magaia in Chiúre district, on the northern bank of the Lúrio, IS claimed. That day, a local source reported that insurgents had captured a couple with six children in the nearby village of Siripa in Chiúre. Their fate is currently unknown.

In addition to those civilians directly targeted by the insurgents, their activity had significantly wider implications for the local civilian population. The International Organisation of Migration [reported](#) that 14,287 people were displaced by insurgent violence in Ancuabe and Chiúre between 17 and 24 November.

In Mocímboa da Praia district, in northern Cabo Delgado, insurgents looted food from the village of Nanquidunga on 22 November but there were no reported casualties.

FOCUS: RDF UNDER PRESSURE

The killings in Ancuabe district and the re-emergence of the Naparama militia in the south of Cabo Delgado province are a significant challenge for the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF). Nacuale, where ISM killed 12 members of the Naparama militia, is less than 10 kilometers northwest of the RDF's outpost in the district, raising questions about the RDF's responsiveness in the area. As well as operational challenges, the south of the province has a quite different set of security challenges. In the north, communal militias have acted in support of FADM and intervention forces. In the south, the Naparama militia has a more complicated relationship with authority, as seen in their encounter with FADM in Nanjua on 17 November.

RDF has had a combat outpost in Ancuabe district since December 2022, established in response to the emerging threat posed by ISM insurgents in the south of the province. The outpost lies on the edge of Niare village, 12 km southwest of Ancuabe district headquarters. Prior to June 2022, ACLED recorded just six incidents in Ancuabe and none in Chiúre districts involving ISM in 2019 and 2020. That changed in June 2022, when small groups of ISM fighters moved into the south of the province, targeting isolated rural communities. In the second half of that year, ISM killed almost 100 civilians in Ancuabe and Chiúre districts.

The outpost has had some success in recent years. ACLED data show just two political violence events and three fatalities involving ISM in Ancuabe district, and none in Chiúre for all of 2023. However, it would be rash to attribute this wholly to the Niare deployment. ISM activity across the province fell dramatically in 2023, before increasing again in 2024, across the province, including in Ancuabe and Chiúre districts. Thus far in 2024, the group has been involved in at least 29 violent events with 53 fatalities, suggesting that RDF may be under pressure.

The Nacuale and Nanao killings suggest that the RDF's use of mounted patrols and static defense has its limitations in countering a mobile guerilla force. ISM's presence in the district was known as early as 13 November, according to local sources. The Naparama militia and FADM were responding to this when they met in the Nanjua area on 17 November. In the days prior, multiple sources shared information about the movements of ISM in the area. None mentioned RDF mobilisation.

The re-emergence of the Naparama militia complicates the operating environment for the RDF. In the north of the province, communal militias that grew out of local Frelimo structures have been an important part of the security response to ISM. In the south, the Naparama militia, though it re-emerged in 2022 as a response to ISM attacks against civilians after being dormant since the civil war, has no loyalty to the state. This was seen vividly in its interception of a FADM force near Nanjua. The decision of that force to follow the instructions of a group of unarmed Naparama, and for commanders to sit with their leaders to reassure them, indicates that FADM is having to adjust operations to account for community distrust of the state. Operating in such a foreign environment, RDF may be more comfortable with a less offensive posture than seems to be required.

ROUND UP

TotalEnergies was aware of Joint Task Force abuses, new investigation finds

A joint investigation by [Source Material](#) and [Le Monde](#) revealed that TotalEnergies was aware of severe human rights abuses linked to the Mozambican military's Joint Task Force (JTF), which it had directly funded until October 2023. The investigation cites internal documents retrieved by a freedom of information request

that show that the French energy giant suspended bonus payments to the JTF after receiving reports that civilians had been murdered and assaulted by soldiers between April and September 2021, when the internal report was produced. However, the company continued to fund the JTF until French humanitarian Jean-Christophe Rufin, in September 2023, [recommended](#) cutting direct ties with the military.

One woman interviewed by Source Material claimed she was beaten so badly by JTF soldiers that she is still unable to work, but has not received any compensation. The interviews corroborate some details of the [Politico report](#) by journalist Alex Perry, which found that the JTF arbitrarily detained local civilians in shipping containers on the TotalEnergies project site in Afungi before executing several of them in 2021.

Presidential pretender Venâncio Mondlane demands quick end to conflict in Cabo Delgado

In response to President Filipe Nyusi's 19 October [invitation](#) to a round table dialogue with the presidential candidates, Venâncio Mondlane presented a [proposed](#) 20-point agenda for discussion. Item 18 on the agenda is “elimination of the insurgency in Cabo Delgado in less than one year.” Mondlane had not directly addressed the issue of the insurgency either during the campaign or in the weeks following the poll. In an online address on 12 November, he accused senior Frelimo figures of having mining interests in Cabo Delgado, though this was in response to a [comment](#) by Alcinda Abreu of Frelimo's Political Commission, who suggested that there was a plot to remove liberation parties such as Frelimo from power in order to seize control of natural resources.

The insurgents seem to be considering Mondlane's proposals, however. When taking food from households in Nanquidunga village on 22 November, insurgents told locals that Mondlane should be granted power so they could give up the insurgency and return to their families. The extent to which this sentiment is representative of the group is unknown.

Constitutional Council expects to announce election results by 23 December

The Constitutional Council, the highest court in Mozambique that rules on elections and electoral disputes, expects to announce the final results of the general election by 23 December. While there is no specific legal deadline for the validation and announcement of election results, Mozambique's constitution requires the first session of parliament to be held within 20 days of the announcement of the results. The current legislative period began on 12 January 2020 and must last five years, setting a strict time limit for parliament to meet.

More evidence of IS's continent-wide networks emerges

Two recent reports give insight into IS's wider operations in the region. On 24 November, Le Monde [reported](#) on simultaneous arrests of Iraqi and Syrian members of IS in Cote d'Ivoire and Madagascar on 28 July. The suspects had originally left Syria in 2016, traveling through Turkey, and Sudan before settling in Cote d'Ivoire and Madagascar. Meanwhile, the [latest report](#) of the UN Security Council's al-Shabaab sanctions monitoring committee notes that the finance function of IS's Karrar hub in Somalia is still in place despite the killing of its head, [Bilal al-Sudani](#), by US special forces in January 2023. The role of the Karrar office in supporting ISM has been documented by both the [UN Security Council](#) and the [Bridgeway Foundation](#).



NOTE: This map displays events that have taken place in Cabo Delgado province from 9 - 22 November 2024. Some events from this period may be included in the next infographic due to reporting delays. ACLED is a living dataset and figures are subject to change as new information becomes available.