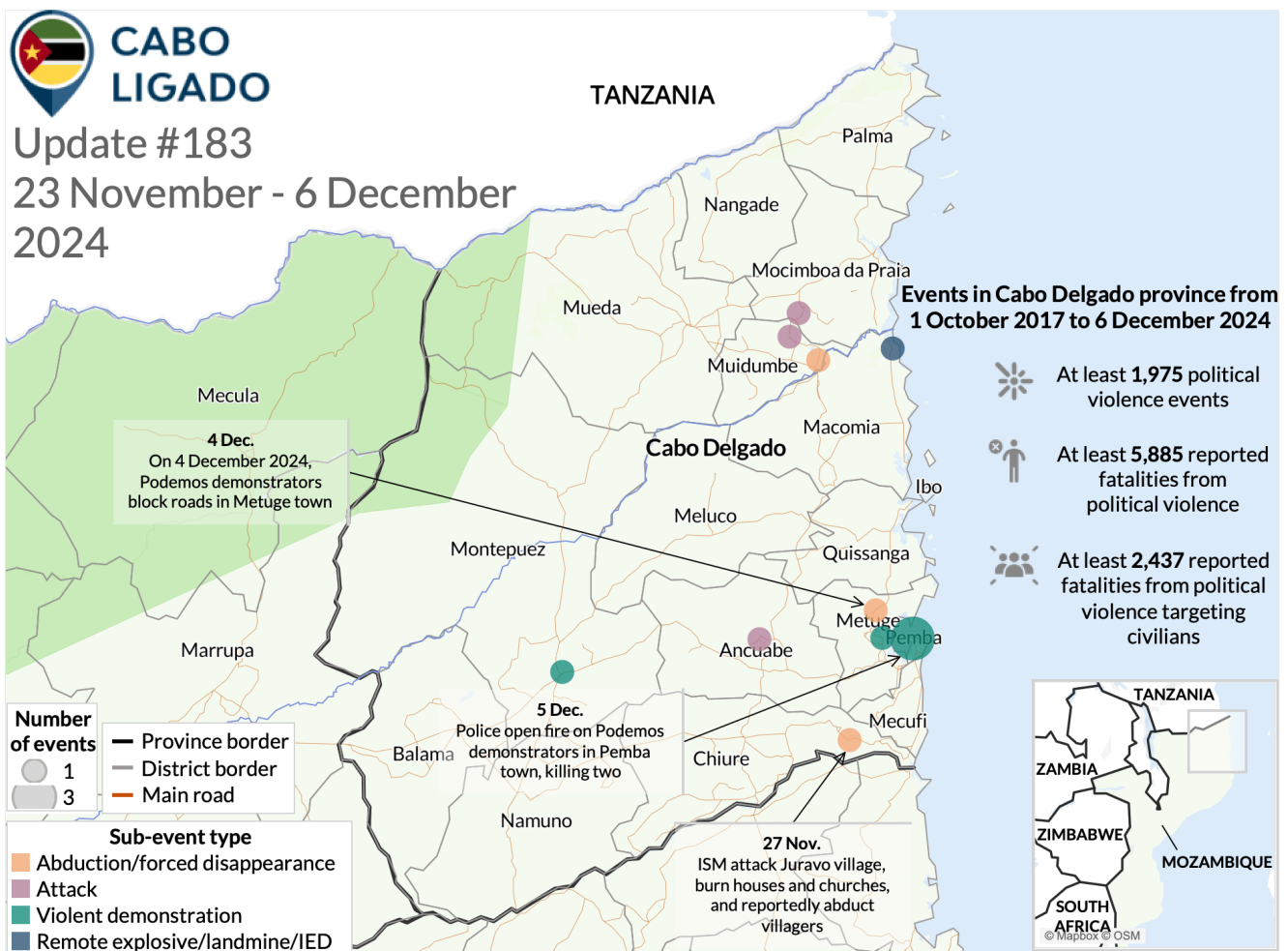


Dec 12, 2024

Cabo Ligado Update: 25 November-8 December 2024



NOTE: This map displays events that have taken place in Cabo Delgado province from 23 November - 6 December 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.

Situation Summary

Islamic State Mozambique (ISM) remained active in Pemba seven districts of Cabo Delgado over the past fortnight, though scattered and concentrating on looting supplies, with just one fatality. In Pemba however, at least three people died in anti-government demonstrations that recommenced on 4 December, amid widespread and rising turmoil across Mozambique over the disputed elections. In this

update, we consider these nationwide developments, their impact on counterinsurgency operations, and steps being taken to resolve the crisis. Reflecting the severity of Mozambique's post-election crisis, violent demonstrations broke out in Metuge, Montepuez, and Pemba districts. These occurred in response to the call by Podemos presidential candidate Venancio Mondlane for eight days of protest, beginning 4 December. Protests and violent demonstrations occurred in at least nine provinces from 4 to 6 December. ACLED data indicate at least 25 events on 4 December alone, the highest number of demonstration and protest events for one day that ACLED has recorded for Mozambique. Over the three days, at least 26 fatalities were recorded related to the demonstrations.

ISM appears to be operating in dispersed groups across Cabo Delgado province currently. The group of fighters that marched south to Nampula province two weeks ago has returned north, while others have carried out small-scale attacks in Metuge, Mocímboa da Praia, Macomia, Meluco, and Muidumbe districts. After briefly crossing the Lúrio river into the Eráti district of Nampula on 20 November, insurgents returned to Cabo Delgado and attacked the villages of Juravo and Tacuane in the south of Chiúre district on 27 November. Islamic State (IS) claimed to have burned four churches and 16 houses. There were no reported casualties, but one source alleged that ISM abducted some villagers. On 2 December, insurgents, likely the same group, appeared approximately 70 km to the north, in the village of Mopanha in Ancuabe district and burned several homes.

Five days later, on 7 December, insurgents attacked the villages of Muaguide and Mairire in Meluco district, approximately 50 km north of Mopanha. IS claimed both attacks in posts on social media. In Muaguide, insurgents burned the police station and several homes, and in Mairire IS said it burned two homes. Local sources reported that insurgents also looted medicine in Muaguide and food in Mairire. A photo report issued by IS indicated that at least 12 men participated in the attack on Muaguide, armed with medium machine guns and at least one rocket-propelled grenade launcher.

A separate insurgent group has been active in the districts of Metuge and Quissanga. On 25 November, armed insurgents were seen around the villages of Nampipi and Muiriti in Metuge, the [Lusa](#) news agency reported. Two days later, insurgents looted the nearby village of Walopuana, ordering residents to leave and forcing four girls to help carry away the stolen goods before releasing them two days later, according to local sources.

Insurgents also seem to still be based in Macomia and Muidumbe on either side of the Messalo river. Local sources claimed insurgents looted the villages of Chai on 1 December and Novo Cabo Delgado on 4 December in Macomia, just south of the Messalo. On 6 December, IS claimed to have burned seven homes in the village of Mungue in Muidumbe, but this has so far not been reported by other sources.

Meanwhile, another distinct group of insurgents have been circulating in the vicinity of Mocímboa da Praia town. One source claimed insurgents passed through Panazi, on the town's outskirts, on 28 November and stole some people's food and clothing. Sources reported seeing insurgents around the villages of 1 de Maio and Tete just north of the town, toward the border of Palma district, over the next two days. On 7 December, one source reported that insurgents looted food from the village of Nanquidunga south of Mocímoba da Praia.

In parallel to insurgent activities, social mobilization over contested elections escalated. On 2 December, Mondlane announced the fourth phase of demonstrations against the election results that he dubbed "4x4." This fourth phase of demonstrations was to continue for eight days starting on 4 December. Mondlane called on supporters to gather on main roads, sing the national anthem, and wear graduation clothes to symbolize their dignity.

Mondlane's call was responded to widely. Frelimo offices and state institutions were targeted by Mondlane's supporters across the country. In Pemba, the provincial capital of Cabo Delgado, anti-government protests claimed at least three lives on 4 and 5 December, with both police and the Defense Armed Forces of Mozambique (FADM) involved. The Frelimo office in the Alto Gingone neighborhood was burned down on 5 December. Also on 5 December, protesters symbolically tore down the statue of the still-living [Alberto Chipande](#), a veteran of the independence struggle who fired some of the first shots of the war against the Portuguese in Cabo Delgado.

In Nampula province, at least seven died when the police Rapid Intervention Unit opened fire on demonstrators who had blocked a road out of Nampula city on 4 December. The following day, in Namina town in the province, police opened fire on demonstrators who had blocked a road and burned a Frelimo office, again killing seven.

The most serious unrest occurred in Morrumbala district headquarters in Zambezia province. On 4 December, Podemos supporters attacked the district police station, the Frelimo office, the district judicial court, and the municipal assembly. They also targeted the offices of the district election commission, and the offices of the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration. The district prison was also attacked, leading to the escape of approximately 100 prisoners. Clips on [social media](#) showed youth in control of police vehicles, and displaying firearms taken from the police station. At least three fatalities were recorded.

Trouble continued into the weekend. At Ressano Garcia in Maputo Province's Moamba district, protestors threatened the South African-owned Gigawatt and Ressano Garcia power plants, prompting their [temporary closure](#). In Nampula, protestors attacked the Moma district administrative headquarters on 5

December. The following day, protesters broke into the [Kenmare Resources mine site](#) in the district, causing some damage.

Focus: Mozambique's crisis heightens risk for RDF

The Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) has developed a good reputation with communities in Cabo Delgado since it deployed to Mozambique under a bilateral agreement in July 2021. Its focus on civilian protection is reflected in its being involved in just two civilian targeting events over the course of its involvement. Its counter-insurgency operations have diminished the threat from ISM, while a network of combat outposts has kept civilian traffic flowing on the province's main highway, the N380. There were indications of a more aggressive approach in July and August, when offensive, and potentially non-discriminatory, air operations were launched in parts of Macomia district where civilians were present. However, the ongoing violence connected to anti-Frelimo demonstrations presents both political risk and operational risks that may already be affecting its counter-insurgency operations.

The RDF's presence is strongly associated with the TotalEnergies LNG plant on the Afungi peninsula, where the RDF maintains a nearby base. In mid-November, protestors [demonstrated](#) over land compensation issues at the LNG plant's main gate, blocking access for at least one day. In Balama district in southwest Cabo Delgado, residents of eight villages continue to blockade the Syrah Resources graphite mine, according to local sources. The blockade [began on 29 September](#), with protestors claiming that compensation paid by the company had not been passed on to them by the local government. Post-election demonstrations elsewhere in Mozambique have also targeted large foreign investments. These included Kenmare Resources in Nampula, and the South African-owned Gigawatt and Ressano Garcia power plants in Maputo, all of which were affected in the past week's demonstrations.

Rwanda's role in the protection of strategic investment projects has not yet become an issue in the post-election disorder. However, recent unfounded rumors that the RDF had been deployed against civilians in Maputo quickly found traction in [mainstream](#) and [social media](#), indicating that RDF's role in Mozambique could become a driver of tension unpredictably, placing the RDF in a difficult position. The interests of Frelimo elites in mining concerns were recently highlighted by Venancio Mondlane, based on a [2023 study](#) by the Centre for Public Integrity. These constraining issues are not going away. In his 10 December [livestream](#) on Facebook, Mondlane repeated the allegation of the RDF being deployed in Maputo and called for the closure of all mining concessions until 15 January, the day the next president is due to take office.

Violent demonstrations in Metuge, Montepueza, and Pemba - in particular the death of civilians in Pemba - may cause RDF to continue to moderate their operations. They are also faced with a poorly developed

and volatile security sector. In the south the Naparama militia is involved in the blockade of the Syrah Resources site, and in Ancuabe district, recently [detained](#) a Mozambican military patrol in the RDF's area of responsibility. Proactive operations against ISM will become more challenging where the host government's political legitimacy, and that of the security branch, are in question.

Round Up

Mozambique in search of a solution to the post-election crisis

On 5 December, Mondlane [invited](#) Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi to a public virtual dialogue, after Nyusi's planned meeting with the four candidates failed due to [Mondlane's absence](#). There is no information on whether or not Nyusi accepted the proposal. Instead, Nyusi has been holding meetings with different sectors, ranging from academic institutions to businesses and religious organizations. At a meeting with businessmen on Monday, Nyusi [suggested](#) that the solution to the crisis should be legal and not political, 'so that we don't create cyclical precedents in our country,' he said.

Behind the scenes, several political solutions to the post-election crisis have been proposed. These include a call for a transitional government and new elections under international supervision, a source close to the matter said. Mondlane [rejects](#) the idea of nullifying the election results or setting up a transitional government under the outgoing president. He sees this as a way of keeping Nyusi in power. Frelimo has given no indication of a political solution. Some of its members are collecting signatures to suspend Nyusi as party leader and eventually hold a congress to discuss his position, a source said.

Resolution of the national political crisis will be critical to immediate counter-insurgency operations. The Defense and Security Forces are not only distracted from such operations, but actively targeting civilians in their response to the crisis, and further undermining trust in state institutions across the country, including Cabo Delgado. While ISM has been quiet this past fortnight, it likely sees opportunity in this disorder.

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