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## Communities attack mines as local grievances are incorporated into protests and win concessions

The Australian mining company Syrah announced today (12 December) that it has invoked "force majeure" - events beyond their control - to stop work at their **Balama**, Cabo Delgado, graphite mine. The cause is the post-election national protests, which since the election has been joined by local farmers who say the mine pushed them off their land and they were not given alternative farms. Protesters blocked access to the mine.

Syrah said in a statement: "With conditions continuing to deteriorate in Mozambique and new protest actions by the opposition to the government announced recently, Syrah is unable to carry out a production campaign."

The mine produces graphite for electric car batteries. As part of a US push to encourage graphite producers to supply the US and not China, Syrah was given \$248 mn loans by the US International Development Finance Corporation and the US Department of Energy. Force majeure means it is defaulting on those loans. Its share price fell 28% today.

As the protests have become more about poverty and inequality, mines and factories are being attacked by nearby communities with unresolved grievances. Local people attacked the tantalite mine in Marropino, **Mulevala** district, Zambézia and did enough damage to close the mine, owned by the British company Highland African Mining Company (HAMC) and operated for 15 years. The local dispute dates back to the opening of the mine and is over access to the mine tailings (waste after the tantalite has been mechanically removed). Dozens of local people, especially women and children, pick over the tailings to extract the tantalite that remains, which they sell. Local people claim the waste, which comes from land which was theirs, but HAMC accuses them of being illegal garimpeiros.

Local people also attacked the Kenmare tantalite mine on the coast at **Moma**, also in Zambézia, 300 km to the east of the HAMC mine. The impact was less serious than was initially reported. Buildings were not damaged and mining has not stopped, but two company cars were burned. And a plane flying in people as part of normal staff rotation

was not allowed to land, delaying the shift change for a day. The local dispute is that Kenmare had promised \$3mn to build a bridge across the Larde River linking to the towns of Larde and Topuito. This would significantly improve local communication, but Kenmare has never released the money. Kenmare blames the National Roads Authority for never organising a contractor.

Even TotalEnergies had to respond to protests in recent weeks. The demonstration were by people who lost farmland to the gas project on the [Afungi peninsula in Palma](#), Cabo Delgado. Resettlement is not just about houses, but also livelihoods - how people earn a living. Earlier this year TotalEnergies completed moving people who had been living on the peninsula to new houses. But there have been growing protests by people who lived outside the area but lost farmland inside it. So TotalEnergies has agreed to provide farmland for the affected families.

People attacked the [Chimanimani](#) national park headquarters in Manica province, causing significant damage. The attackers said they were Mondlane protesters, but in fact they were garimpeiros. The border between Manica province in Mozambique and Manicaland in Zimbabwe runs through hills that contain significant gold deposits. The gold price has jumped from \$2000 to \$2600 in just a year. Chimanimani has been trying to prevent the garimpeiros from mining within the park, so the artisanal miners have increased the pressure, actually attacking the park headquarters. Artisanal gold mining causes significant environmental damage, and is also dangerous. But the current protests are because the Frelimo elite controls the mineral wealth, and poverty and inequality are so great. Garimpeiros are young men trying to earn money to feed families.

Protesters who closed the [Ressano Garcia](#) border post with South Africa also forced the shutdown of the two nearby gas-fired electricity generators. One is owned by Gigawatt, which is a majority owned by ministers of the Joaquim Chissano government. The other is owned by EDM, the state-owned electricity company. The shutdown reduced election supplies to Maputo and the south of Mozambique. The grievance here was the EDM promised electricity links to 4000 houses, and only did half that many. EDM promised to connect the other 2000, and protesters agreed that the power stations could resume operations.



In [Marracuene](#), Maputo province, on Wednesday (11 December), local people looted the Cervejas de Moçambique (CDM) beer factory, taking substantial amounts of beer (as

shown in the photo) and forcing the brewery to close. The occurred the days after the end of the multi-day blockage of main N1 road at nearby Bobole for several days.

## Number of deaths now exceeds 120

The demonstrations have now lasted nearly two months and have caused the deaths of over 120 people. The data, harmonised by civil society organisations including CIP, show that by yesterday (11 December) evening, 118 deaths caused by police bullets had been confirmed.

If deaths by assault, or with resort to blunt instruments wielded by the police are included, the number of deaths during the demonstrations now exceeds 120.

## Cyclone Chido to hit Cabo Delgado Sunday

Cyclone Chido is moving west and passing the top of Madagascar and is expected to make landfall between Pemba and Nacala on Sunday (15 December) with windspeeds of up to 175 km/h.



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