



PLSO MOZAMBIQUE

Weekly Update

Reporting Period:
08 – 14 November 2024



We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the Implementing Partners who were exceptionally active in our WhatsApp Groups this week. Your efforts in sharing safety and security information have played a vital role in keeping our community and colleagues safe. Your contributions have significantly enriched this week's report, and we truly appreciate your commitment and collaboration.

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Current General IP Safety & Security Guidance

All guidance provided by the PLSO Activity should be treated as advisory rather than prescriptive. Implementing Partner (IP) leadership and their security points of contact (POCs) are encouraged to incorporate this guidance into their own decision-making processes. Ultimately, all security and safety-related decisions will be made independently by each IP, taking into account their specific circumstances and operational capacities.

Prioritize Staff Safety:

- Encourage remote work in dense urban areas wherever possible.
- Establish clear communication protocols for staff to report their location and safety status, considering potential disruptions in internet and phone services.

Coordinate Emergency Plans:

- Update evacuation and contingency plans, ensuring staff know procedures for sheltering in place or safely leaving high-risk areas.

Engage with Reliable Information Sources:

- Monitor updates from PLSO, local embassies, humanitarian organizations, and news outlets, for real-time security developments.
- Share verified information on road closures, protest hotspots, or curfews with field teams.

Restrict Non-Essential Travel:

- Avoid areas where protests and government crackdowns are ongoing, including central protest zones in Maputo, Nampula, Nacala, and Quelimane.
- Avoid large crowds and limit travel during evening hours.

Be Culturally Sensitive and Neutral:

- Maintain political neutrality in discussions related to the elections or political affiliations to avoid escalating tensions with communities or authorities.

Cabo Delgado Security Situation

Incidents

- **November 8:** Movements of insurgent groups force the abandonment of the population in villages in Muidumbe district.
- **November 8:** An armed terrorist group attacked the community of Minhanha, in the district of Meluco.
- **November 10:** The Indian government offered two fast interception vessels (FICs) to Mozambique, to reinforce the current insurgency in the province of Cabo Delgado.
- **November 11:** The Mozambican Air Force acquired a CASA C295 transport aircraft from Airbus, to assist in various military operations.
- **November 11:** The population of the village of Chicomo, district of Meluco, abandoned the community after an attack by alleged terrorist groups.

- **November 11:** Residents in Macomia, Cabo Delgado, are fleeing their villages due to growing movements of Islamist terrorists in the region.
 - **November 12:** In Nangade District, insurgents launched an attack on Muangaza, near Litingina, resulting in the beheading of at least one individual.
 - **November 12:** A group of insurgents was reportedly spotted in Litapata and signs of insurgent movement in the villages of 24 de Marco in Muidumbe district.
 - **November 12:** The town of Macomia, in Cabo Delgado, saw unusual movement by the Armed Forces between Monday and Tuesday, generating concern among residents.
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During the reporting period, the province of Cabo Delgado in northern Mozambique witnessed a significant increase in armed group activity, with insurgent groups intensifying their operations, particularly in the northern and central regions of the province. This escalation in violence has severely impacted local communities, as insurgents have targeted areas with vulnerable security forces. Attacks have primarily affected the districts of Macomia, Meluco, Nangade, and Muidumbe, where the insurgents have engaged in sporadic attacks, movements, looting, and beheadings.

Geographical Focus: All reported incidents are concentrated in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, indicating heightened activity in this region, specifically in districts like Muidumbe, Meluco, Macomia, and Nangade. Northern and Central Cabo Delgado regions continue to face the most significant insurgent threats. Armed groups have concentrated their operations on villages with limited or vulnerable security presence. The sporadic nature of the attacks suggests that insurgents are relying on mobility and surprise, focusing on areas where security forces may be thinly deployed or diverted to other priorities

Insurgency Patterns:

- Multiple entries indicate a pattern of insurgent movements and attacks in various villages, leading to population displacement.
- The reported attacks in Muidumbe, Minhanha and Chicomo- Meluco, and Macomia highlight the insurgents' tactics of targeting villages and sparking fear, leading to widespread evacuations.

Possible Causes for Increased Activity: The increase in insurgent activity during this period may be partially due to the redistribution of Mozambican military forces in response to the ongoing demonstrations and political unrest within the country. Some troops currently stationed in Cabo Delgado have been diverted to manage the domestic security situation related to the national protests, leaving key areas of Cabo Delgado more vulnerable to insurgent activities.

Escalation Timeline:

- **8-November** marks the beginning of recorded events with insurgent actions causing population displacement and an attack on the Minhanha community, Meluco.
- By **10-November**, the escalation continues with both an attack on infrastructure (the market fire in Macomia) and external involvement, as the Indian government supplies Mozambique with vessels to combat the insurgency.
- **11-November** shows intensified displacement due to continued insurgent activities in Meluco and Macomia.
- **12-November** indicates further insurgent violence, including a beheading and sightings in multiple villages, coupled with increased military presence, likely in response to growing instability.

International Support:

On **10-November**, the Indian government intervened by providing Mozambique with two fast interception vessels, which might reflect international recognition of the insurgency threat in Cabo Delgado. This action could influence future security dynamics in the region.

1. Civilian Impact:

- Civilians are heavily impacted, as seen in reports of abandoned villages and market fires causing panic.
- The continuous displacement indicates a humanitarian crisis, as residents are forced to leave their homes due to insurgent threats and violence.

2. Military Activity:

- On **12-November**, there is unusual military movement in Macomia, which may indicate either a response to insurgent activity or preventive measures to safeguard residents. This may be part of a larger strategic shift by the Armed Forces to control insurgent spread.

Impact on Local Populations: Impact on Local Populations

The surge in insurgent activity has led to widespread displacement, increased humanitarian needs, and a deep sense of insecurity in local communities. Many residents have fled, disrupting daily life and limiting access to essential services, especially for vulnerable groups like women and children. The growing number of displaced people has strained humanitarian organizations, with violence and security challenges frequently delaying or disrupting aid delivery.

Predictions:

Increased insurgent attacks: Expect continued insurgent activity in rural areas, especially in districts like Mocimboa da Praia, Macomia, and Muidumbe. IED attacks on security convoys and civilian traffic are anticipated.

Security operations: Joint Mozambican and Rwandan forces are likely to increase operations around urban centres to maintain control, including more road checkpoints and movement restrictions.

Protests likely to continue: Protests linked to the electoral results will likely persist, with more demonstrations expected in Cabo Delgado, including Pemba, Chiure, and Montepuez. While many protests will be peaceful, clashes are possible, and authorities may impose curfews or restrictions.

Further displacement and humanitarian pressure: Continued insurgent attacks will likely cause more displacements, exacerbating humanitarian challenges in the region.

Communication disruptions: Government responses to protests may include internet restrictions or communication cuts, further hindering humanitarian efforts and operational coordination.

Conclusion

The security situation in Cabo Delgado is deteriorating, with insurgents ramping up attacks in vulnerable districts like Macomia, Meluco, Nangade, and Muidumbe. These violent attacks have led to widespread civilian displacement and intensified local insecurity.

Mozambican forces, already stretched thin due to redeployment for domestic unrest, are rumored to be demobilizing partly due to poor equipment, low morale, and inadequate rations. This weakened security presence has allowed insurgents to exploit unprotected areas, worsening the crisis.

International support, such as India's provision of fast interception vessels, underscores global concern but hasn't stemmed the violence. Civilians, especially vulnerable groups, remain at high risk. Insurgent attacks are expected to persist, with ongoing political protests further straining resources and possibly leading to

communication restrictions that could hinder humanitarian aid. Stabilizing Cabo Delgado will require immediate, coordinated efforts.



Protestors holding up banners

Political Highlights

Cabo Delgado Province

- **Note:** While not included in this specific set of incidents, Cabo Delgado has been a known hotspot for security issues, particularly related to insurgent activity and unrest. Mentioning Cabo Delgado provides context for the national and security issues impacting other regions.

Niassa Province

- **Incidents:** A peaceful protest in Lichinga was dispersed by police using tear gas, and four protesters were arrested.
- **Analysis:** Niassa's protests were largely peaceful, but the police response indicates low tolerance for dissent even in less volatile areas. The arrest of protesters reflects a consistent pattern of restrictive government responses across provinces.

Nampula Province

- **Incidents:** Police reported persecution by unknown individuals; protesters in Carrupeia and Namicopo neighborhoods burned tires and set up barricades, leading to police shootings, including three fatalities.

- **Analysis:** Nampula has seen heightened tension, with protests escalating to violence and resulting in fatalities. The police presence and response indicate an effort to maintain control, but the violent outcomes reflect underlying unrest and resentment among civilians, particularly regarding police actions.

Zambezia Province

- **Incidents:** Police interrupted a peaceful Renamo march at Quelimane Airport using tear gas; citizens set fire to a police station, released prisoners, and attacked a local elections official.
- **Analysis:** Zambezia has seen particularly intense unrest, with actions ranging from organized protests to mob violence. The population's targeting of local officials and law enforcement suggests deep-seated frustration with both governance and security forces, possibly driven by perceived electoral injustices.

Tete Province

- **Incidents:** PODEMOS party announced a peaceful demonstration at the Zobue border with Malawi.
- **Analysis:** In Tete, political parties are leveraging cross-border areas to draw attention to national issues, suggesting an attempt to internationalize or amplify the impact of their protests. The planned peaceful nature of the demonstration contrasts with more violent protests in other provinces.

Manica Province

- **Incidents:** Movement of people and goods continued normally at the Machipanda border with Zimbabwe.
- **Analysis:** Manica appears relatively stable compared to other provinces, with no major disruptions reported. The continuity of cross-border movement suggests that political unrest may be less intense in this region, or that government control is stronger here.

Sofala Province

- **Incidents:** Mozambican police seized Molotov cocktails and tires in Beira's Munhava neighborhood, potentially related to protests. The World Bank and Germany's KFW rejected the government's choice of contractor for Beira's coastal protection works.
- **Analysis:** Sofala faces both protest-related security threats and broader political and economic challenges, including international scrutiny of government decisions. The presence of protest materials points to possible organized unrest, and the contractor rejection underscores issues of transparency and accountability in government projects.

Maputo Province and Maputo City

- **Incidents:** Authorities expelled Portuguese journalists; police used tear gas on peaceful protesters near Eduardo Mondlane's statue; product shortages due to protests led to price spikes; demonstrators blocked traffic at the Ressano Garcia border; motorcycle taxi drivers protested election fraud with a horn-blaring procession.
- **Analysis:** Maputo, as the capital, is a focal point for protests and government response. Authorities' heavy-handed tactics, including tear gas, signal a hard stance on dissent. Product shortages and price spikes highlight the economic impact of prolonged demonstrations, while widespread protests reflect the city's role as a hub of political activism.

National and International Observations

- **National Level:** Calls for extended protests, significant economic losses, delayed electoral documentation, and legal actions against protesters show the government's strict stance on unrest. Official rhetoric labeling demonstrations as terror indicates a low tolerance for dissent.
- **International Responses:** Protests in Brussels and Paris, along with appeals for humanitarian aid at the Mozambique-South Africa border, reflect global attention on Mozambique's internal issues. This international scrutiny may increase pressure on the government to address electoral grievances and governance concerns.

Conclusion

Mozambique's political unrest spans from north to south, with varying levels of intensity. Northern and central provinces like Nampula and Zambezia have witnessed violent clashes and community-driven actions against officials and police, reflecting deep-rooted grievances. In contrast, southern regions like Maputo have seen organized, but largely peaceful, demonstrations met with firm police responses.

The Mozambican government's strict control measures, labeling protests as terror-related, risk further alienating the public. Growing international attention and humanitarian appeals indicate that Mozambique's crisis has broader regional implications, requiring a balanced approach to address both security and political concerns effectively.

The 4th Stage of Protests



Venâncio Mondlane's 4th Stage of Protests continues to represent a significant moment in the ongoing struggle for political and social change in Mozambique. Although the protests have been met with resistance from the government, they have succeeded in drawing attention to critical issues of corruption, economic inequality, and human rights. The outcome of this stage will depend largely on the ability of protestors to maintain momentum and pressure the government into genuine reform, as well as the broader international community's response to the crisis in Mozambique. Whether this movement will lead to significant political change remains uncertain, but it has undoubtedly marked a turning point in Mozambique's political trajectory.

Government Response: The Mozambican government, led by FRELIMO, has responded with a mixture of repression and limited concessions. While the government has dismissed the protests as being orchestrated by "foreign agents" and "dissidents," it has also occasionally acknowledged the need for reforms, especially in terms of improving social welfare programs. In response to the protests' escalation, the government has:

- Increased police and military presence in major cities, particularly Maputo.
- Restricted internet access and social media platforms during key protest days to prevent the mobilization of large crowds.
- Detained opposition leaders and civil society activists, accusing them of inciting violence and threatening national security.

International Diplomatic Pressure: As protests continue in Mozambique, the government faces increasing diplomatic pressure, particularly from the European Union, Amnesty International, SADC, and the United States. These entities have issued statements calling for peaceful dialogue and the protection of citizens' rights to protest. Additionally, the UN has raised concerns about human rights abuses and urged the government to engage in constructive dialogue with opposition groups.

International Solidarity Movements: Global solidarity movements and the Mozambican diaspora have organized protests in cities like Lisbon, Brussels, Paris, New York, and London, demanding an end to government repression and support for the Mozambican people's right to protest.

Predictions:

The protests in Mozambique are likely to continue for the foreseeable future, with the potential for further escalation. Several factors will shape the outcome:

- **Political Gridlock:** Given the government's refusal to engage in meaningful reform, the protests are unlikely to subside unless there is significant external pressure or a shift in the political landscape. If the government continues its hardline approach, the protests could intensify, leading to more widespread civil disobedience or even violent conflict.
- **International Intervention:** The pressure from international actors could eventually lead to negotiations or concessions, but this is not guaranteed. Mozambique's strategic importance, particularly in terms of its natural resources, could hinder a robust international intervention.
- **Economic Pressure:** The country's growing economic instability, exacerbated by the protests, could push the government towards reform. However, unless reforms address the underlying causes of discontent such as corruption, inequality, and governance protests are likely to persist.
- **Regional Spillover:** If the situation deteriorates, there is a risk of instability spilling over into neighbouring countries, especially within the context of the broader Southern African political and economic environment.

Conclusion: Venâncio Mondlane protests in Mozambique are not only a reflection of widespread public dissatisfaction but also an indicator of the deepening political and social divides within the country. Without substantial political and economic reforms, the situation could continue to escalate, leading to potential instability that could have far-reaching consequences for both Mozambique and the Southern African region.

Incidents Summary

Political Protests and Elections

Maputo Province

- **November 12:** The South African Council of Churches (SACC) has appealed to churches near the Lebombo border post between South Africa and Mozambique to provide humanitarian aid to those in need.
- **November 13:** Police used tear gas to disperse protesters holding a peaceful demonstration near the statue of Eduardo Mondlane in the Alto Mae neighborhood.
- **November 13:** The shortage of products caused by the protests has caused prices to soar in markets.
- **November 13:** Protesters formed a human barrier to prevent vehicle traffic at the Ressano Garcia Border.
- **November 13:** School managers have assured that they will teach until the end of the academic year, despite the disruptions caused by protests.
- **November 14:** In Maputo City, a group of motorcycle taxi drivers paraded across the capital while sounding their horns with posters stuck to their vehicles protesting the election fraud. The police fired tear gas at them.

Sofala Province

- **November 8:** Mozambican police (PRM) seized 11 Molotov cocktails and 30 tyres in Beira's Munhava neighborhood, likely linked to protests.

Manica Province

- **November 13:** Movement of people and goods continues normally on the Machipanda border between Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

Tete Province

- **November 12:** The PODEMOS party informed the police through a signed letter about their intent to hold a peaceful demonstration in the border post of Zobue, near Malawi, on November 13-15.

Zambezia Province

- **November 13:** A peaceful march by RENAMO supporters was interrupted by the police, who fired shots and launched tear gas at Quelimane Airport.
- **November 14:** The President of the District Elections Commission (CDE) in Inhassunge, was beaten to death by the local population.
- **November 14:** The population set fire to the local police station and a police vehicle.

- **November 14:** The population opened cells and freed prisoners, most of which were protesters arrested during recent demonstrations.

Nampula Province

- **November 13:** In the Carrupeia neighborhood, protesters burned tires and used them as barricades. During the protests, police reportedly shot an individual, likely a protester.
- **November 13:** At least three people were fatally shot during police operations yesterday afternoon in the Namicopo neighborhood, in Nampula.

Niassa Province

- **November 14:** A peaceful march was held in Lichinga. The protesters chanted out loud the name of presidential candidate Venâncio Mondlane. To disperse them, the police fired tear gas and arrested four protesters.

National

- **November 11:** Mondlane has called for three more days of demonstrations, marking the fourth phase of national protests.
- **November 11:** The vice-president of the National Elections Commission (CNE) is unaware of the content of the file submitted to the Constitutional Council regarding discrepancies between voter turnout and registration in the general elections.
- **November 11:** Strikes related to the ongoing protests are estimated to have caused 360 million euros in losses.
- **November 12:** Mozambican protesters demonstrated in Brussels and Paris, calling attention to issues of electoral fraud, security, and corruption in Mozambique.
- **November 12:** The National Elections Commission (CNE) failed to meet the deadline for delivering the notices and minutes of partial and district vote counts, as requested by the Constitutional Council on October 30th.
- **November 12:** The Attorney General's Office has opened 208 criminal cases against individuals involved in violent demonstrations.
- **November 12:** The Police of the Republic of Mozambique (PRM) have issued an ultimatum regarding violent protests, labeling the situation as akin to terrorism, especially in the Cabo Delgado region.
- **November 12:** The Constitutional Council has declined to act on complaints regarding serious electoral fraud presented by opposition parties.
- **November 12:** The nationwide protests, which have led to the paralysis of economic activities and destruction of public and private property, have resulted in losses of at least 24.8 billion meticaís (about 388.1 million dollars).
- **November 13:** Social activists denounce attempts to create terror and intimidation to prevent citizens from exercising their right to demonstrate.
- **November 13:** The Minister of the Interior considers recent violent demonstrations as acts of terror and revolt against the social order.
- **November 13:** The National Defense Council condemns the presence of children in demonstrations, vandalism, and the attempted subversion of the democratic order.



Ressano Garcia border opening gates

General Incidents

- **November 8:** Mozambican authorities expelled two Portuguese journalists from the country.
- **November 10:** A large fire devastated a local market in the town of Macomia, in Cabo Delgado, causing panic among the population.
- **November 11:** The National Criminal Investigation Service (SERNIC) seized 573 kilos of cocaine on a ship from India.
- **November 11:** Two police officers in Maputo were arrested for selling drugs diverted from a batch seized earlier in Inhassoro district, Inhambane province.
- **November 11:** Residents of Xai-Xai in Gaza province are alarmed by an increase in robberies occurring throughout the day, both in homes and on public streets.
- **November 11:** The World Bank and KfW of Germany have rejected the government's selected contractor for coastal protection works in Beira, Sofala province.
- **November 12:** A ton of cannabis sativa was seized in the city of Beira, the drug was found in three residences that functioned as consumption and distribution centers.
- **November 12:** The Mozambican Football Federation (FMF) has urged citizens to maintain a peaceful environment ahead of the national football team's game against Mali on Friday.
- **November 13:** Reports indicated paralyzed activities at the ports of Beira, Nacala and Matola.
- **November 13:** Maputo International Airport reinforces measures to prevent and combat organized and transnational crime.
- **November 13:** The National Criminal Investigation Service (SERNIC) rescued two businessmen on the same day and in the same captivity: a Mozambican businessman kidnapped on August 5 and a Portuguese businessman kidnapped on October 29.
- **November 13:** Mozambique's Armed Forces spent more than 80% of their budget in nine months.

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