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# HUMANIZING SECURITY IN CABO DELGADO

A CSO Report on the  
Drivers of Conflict and  
its Impact on Civilians

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The authors of this report would like to acknowledge the bravery and courage of the men, women and children who have been caught in the most heart-wrenching circumstances in Cabo Delgado. Impoverished, homeless, destitute and facing dire prospects for their futures, they have been subject to the most horrific atrocities. This report is a commitment to ensuring that their voices are heard.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ASWJ - Al-Sunna wa Jama'a

AU - African Union

CDD - Centro para Democracia e Desenvolvimento

CJI - Investigative Journalism Centre - Mozambique

CPI - Center for Public Integrity

DAG - Dyck Advisory Group

DRC - Democratic Republic of Congo

EU - European Union

FDS - Mozambican Forces of Defence and Security

FRELIMO - Frente de Libertação de Moçambique

IDPs - Internally Displaced People

FADM - Mozambique Armed Defence Forces

LNG - Liquefied Natural Gas

MNCs - Multi-National Corporations

OMR - Observatório do Meio Rural

SADC - Southern African Development Community

SGBV - Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

UK - United Kingdom

US - United States

## FOREWORD

The war in Cabo Delgado is now in its fourth year. The human suffering has been incalculable, with currently over 750 000 persons displaced, and many thousands killed. The international community has repeatedly been shocked by reports of extreme brutality.

The situation on the ground is becoming increasingly complex, with the entry of military personnel from at least seven countries – some in a training capacity, others as “boots on the ground”.

Analysts and commentators, both within Mozambique and abroad, point out the complexity of factors fueling the conflict. Nevertheless, the mainstream media has consistently focused almost exclusively on the Islamic angle – that this is a religious war, with the insurgents intending to establish a Caliphate in Northern Mozambique. This point of view is not shared by many in Mozambique. Furthermore, there is a persistent and widely held belief amongst the displaced themselves that the real reason for the war is to drive them off their land, to give access to prospectors and mining companies. This report gives a voice to those directly affected by the conflict – a voice that is almost never heard in the global corridors of power.

It is clear that there can be no solution until the true causes of the conflict are addressed. The report explores the contributing factors – from the “hidden debt” scandal that preceded the conflict, effectively bankrupting the Mozambican state, to issues relating to land tenure and the granting of mining and prospecting concessions. The report exposes those who are profiteering from the ongoing conflict. In the past, the Mozambican government rejected the idea of dialogue and negotiations with the insurgents, saying that they were dealing with a “faceless enemy”. The report puts faces and names to the insurgency leaders, thereby hopefully contributing to the momentum for a non-military, negotiated solution.

The report comes at a critical crossroads in the conflict – with the entry of SADC and Rwandan troops. It is hoped that it will contribute to a greater global understanding of the situation, and to a sustained peace, whereby the people of Cabo Delgado will be able to live productive lives, benefiting from the enormous wealth of their region.



Johan Viljoen  
Director: Denis Hurley Peace Institute

# AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT

In February 2021, civil society organizations in Mozambique and South Africa with international allies, established a coalition focusing on the Cabo Delgado crisis. It aimed to spotlight the violence in Cabo Delgado and push for accountability and improve the living conditions and human rights situation in the region. Notwithstanding recent developments to secure the region through various militaristic means, the threat to civilians, and their livelihood continues unabated. This alone necessitates a study into the drivers of the conflict, the key actors involved, and make recommendations to policy makers on possible ways to quell it.

The report is an attempt to broaden the narrative of the conflict in Cabo Delgado and illustrate the complexity and nuance at the root of the violence. While the popular narrative on this conflict is that it's a terrorist insurgency, reports of violations by government security agencies, proxies and links to Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) engaged in extracting gas in this region have emerged.<sup>1</sup>

This report is intended to build on existing reports about the perpetrators of violence and also shed light on other lesser-known elements that are driving the conflict, as well as highlighting the social injustice suffered by the ordinary women, children and men of this region.

The Centre for Investigative Journalism in Mozambique was tasked with carrying out and documenting a series of interviews with stakeholders in three districts, namely Chiúre, Montepuez and Pemba during May and August 2021. The findings from these interviews are dispersed and anonymized throughout the report to protect the identity of respondents. Interviewees' consent was secured before the interviews.

## Data Collection & Methodology

Travel to all the districts affected by the insurgency was prohibited by authorities. As such, interviews were conducted in the aforementioned districts because:

- a) Most IDPs are located in Pemba;
- b) Montepuez was the site of human rights abuses perpetrated by Mozambican police who severely beat up illegal miners to make way for the industrial mining of gems and rubies;
- c) Montepuez has been the site of conflict between local host communities and IDPs;
- d) Chiúre is also rich in mineral resources.

Qualitative interviews with over 20 participants in the three districts, as well as with Maputo-based policy experts are combined with desktop research for this report. The interviews relied on an informal journalistic style, with open-ended questions that encouraged people to share their personal experiences in their own language. Interviews were therefore conducted in Kimwane e Emakwa and Portuguese.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr41/3545/2021/en/>

# INTRODUCTION

Before October 2017, the northern Mozambican province of Cabo Delgado boasted the third largest bay in the world found in the capital city of Pemba, which teemed with dolphins, a vast array of fish species, and hard and soft corals. Its long coast features white sandy beaches, and a motley of islands which are a perfect destination for tourists. Inland, the province is rich in natural resources, including timber, precious stones, and minerals such as gold.

However, the province has its problems. Years of lack of investment from the government meant that most of the population lived below the poverty line and those in coastal areas eked out a living by fishing and engaging in subsistence agriculture. With the discovery of gems and other precious stones, some joined artisanal mining; and others logged for timber which would find its way in ships to China; and still others ferried illicit narcotics.<sup>2</sup>

The discovery of significant gas reserves in the Rovuma Basin off the coast of Cabo Delgado of Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) - estimated to be the fourth largest in the world - sparked the promise that its population would be lifted out of poverty and the prospect of jobs to locals.<sup>3</sup> However, the promised jobs have yet to materialize.

In October 2017, a local insurgency made itself known by attacking the port town of Mocímboa da Praia. Since then, Cabo Delgado has been facing an upsurge of violence carried out by insurgents, Al-Sunna wa Jama'a (ASWJ). In response to the insurgency and the threat to the operations of MNCs who have invested in the gas extraction sector, the government has deployed the army and private security firms to protect investment infrastructure. They have reacted with a heavy-handed, security-focused approach which has further escalated the crisis and is responsible for violations and destruction of civilians, their property, families and communities.

This wave of insurgency has resulted in an exodus of civilians from the conflict affected regions. There are now approximately 800 000 internally displaced people (IDPs), and this has tested government's ability and capacity to provide humanitarian assistance for the civilians fleeing the areas under attack.<sup>4</sup> The insurgency has also driven people out of Cabo Delgado into the neighbouring provinces. The provinces of Niassa, Nampula and Zambézia are particularly affected.

Belatedly, government has taken to seeking support from other countries in its fight against the insurgency. The United States and the European Union through the former colonial power Portugal have stepped in to help train Mozambican soldiers.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, there are reports that at least 100



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-05-02-cabo-delgado-insurgency-the-shifting-shape-of-the-illicit-economy-in-northern-mozambique/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nesfircroft.com/blog/2020/07/is-mozambique-the-worlds-next-great-energy-superpower>

<sup>4</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/mozambique/briefing-note-civil-documentation-idps-mozambique-august-2021-enpt#:~:text=There%20are%20over%20800%2C000%20IDPs,also%20displaced%20some%20130%2C000%20persons.>

<sup>5</sup> <https://allafrica.com/stories/202103300935.html>

former British SAS fighters are currently in the coastal city of Nacala (Nampula province) training Mozambican forces<sup>6</sup>.

In June 2021, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) sanctioned the deployment of a regional force to help quash the insurgency and restore stability to the conflict-affected region. At the time of writing, the SADC deployment was still underway. However, the final total troop deployment per SADC country is as follows:

1. South Africa= 1495
2. Botswana= 300
3. Zimbabwe= 304
4. Angola= 20
5. Namibia= no troops, but a commitment of N\$5 800 000 (US\$404 000)

Malawi, Lesotho, Eswatini, Comoros, Seychelles, DRC, Mauritius and Tanzania have not sent troops or money, or committed to doing so either.<sup>7</sup> The SADC intervention was preceded by the Rwandan deployment, of more than a thousand troops. Less than a month after the deployment of Rwandan troops, tensions are already emerging, with leading Mozambican human rights activists claiming that the Rwandan forces are conducting their operations like "mercenaries", with little or no command from the Mozambican military. However, the intervention won its first victory in early August, when it was reported that Rwandan forces were able to wrest back control of the port town of Mocimboa da Praia, which has been controlled by insurgent groups for almost a year.

Meanwhile, the insurgency has disrupted economic activity. While an accurate assessment of the economic disruption has been difficult to gauge, the government has reported declines in agricultural outputs from Cabo Delgado over the years.

The LNG investments located in the Afungi Peninsula are perhaps the most significant contributions to the formal economy of the region, totaling \$20bn in infrastructure investments. In May 2021, French energy company Total declared force majeure on its contractual obligations for LNG processing and suspended its operations indefinitely because of rising insecurity.

This drastic decision was also a significant pressure point for the Government of Mozambique, and catalyzed increased military intervention to the region. Shortly after TOTAL's announcement, President Nyusi met bilaterally with French President Macron on the sidelines of the Africa Financing Summit in May. This meeting set in motion a swift series of decisions – namely Macron's state visit to Rwanda and South Africa the following week followed by the announcement of Rwandan military deployment to Cabo Delgado.

Despite increasing military presence, intensifying international scrutiny, the threat to civilians caught in the conflict continues unabated. This is because civilian security – and by extension, human security – remains largely absent from the purview of the leaders and decision-makers. Increased military intervention – coming from SADC, Rwanda, or the West – is not synonymous with guarantees for civilians to be treated humanely in the crosshairs of conflict. There are no provisions for access to justice and accountability for those who have been subjected to ill-treatment by military personnel. Ill-discipline is rampant and goes unaddressed. If left unchecked, it will only fuel locals' disaffection and likely spur further support for the insurgency.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://bit.ly/Moz-535>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/africa/mozambiques-president-unveils-southern-african-troops-fight-insurgents>

# PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CIVILIANS IN CABO DELGADO

The plight of civilians caught up in the violence in Cabo Delgado is the central focus and interest of this report. Since attacks began in the district town of Mocimboa da Praia on 5 October 2017, about 2800 people have died and almost 800 000 have been displaced from their homes, towns and villages.

Entire villages have become ghost towns. Insurgent attacks on Mocimboa da Praia in 2019 forced out local population. Government forces were only able to re-take the town in early August 2021 with the help of Rwandan forces. Most of the people who fled Mocimboa da Praia and the towns that were overrun by insurgents sought refuge in Pemba, Montepuez, Mueda and other towns, with only the clothes on their backs and what little they managed to carry in their journey by boat, vehicle and on foot.

While the violence perpetrated by the ASJW outnumber those of other actors in quantity and severity, it is important to also shed light on the abuses perpetrated by other actors. Articulating the multitude of perpetrators of violence, the many ways that civilians are violated and then denied access to justice and accountability is fundamental to unlocking some of the 'push' factors that drive local communities to support insurgent groups. An Amnesty International report released in March 2021 articulated the brutality experienced by civilians at the hands of private military companies like The Dyck Advisory Group (DAG) and Mozambican Government forces.<sup>8</sup>

Civilians are therefore not safe – even in the hands of those whose mandate it is to protect them. When authorities fail to assume responsibility for the bad actions of their security forces, when there are no guarantees that they will not take place again – and when governments remain silent in calling for troop discipline, civilians have little hope of expecting to be safeguarded.

## **National Security Forces**

Video footage that sporadically emerges of Mozambican Forces of Defence and Security (FDS) members torturing civilians suspected to be insurgents have been a key indicator to the world that government forces continue to mete out disproportionate violence on civilians. In September 2020, a video went viral showing four Mozambican troops chasing, beating and shooting a naked woman 36 times. The troops' recording and distribution of these videos indicates they share such footage willingly to try to convince others they are more powerful than ASWJ.

The Ministries of National Defence and of the Interior denied these violations, but social media has given clear proof that the FDS have been involved in the torture and killing of civilians. Despite government's promises to investigate, none of the soldiers who appeared on the video were disciplined, and neither did the ministries in question initiate disciplinary proceedings.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr41/3545/2021/en/>



An investigation conducted by the Mozambican Centre for Investigative Journalism (CJI) showed that bad behaviour runs deep into the troops. Apart from troops selling information of their movements to the insurgents, they kill for money. In a news report from 2020, the CJI noted:

"The insurgents didn't have the same luck. Apparently, the official rule is not to take them to jail and subsequently to court (when caught). If they don't fall in combat, they are sent to the firewood – a euphemism meaning summary execution."

The report confirmed the growing perception among civilians that the conflict is dehumanising the FDS – making them as feared as insurgents are.

This pattern of behaviour is not new. In April 2012 the FDS were accused of torturing illegal miners in the ruby rich mines of Nhamanumbir, in Montepuez. The illegal miners consisted of youth from Cabo Delgado and foreigners from neighbouring Tanzania. The youth were tortured to dissuade them from panning for rubies and thus make way for the establishment of the Montepuez Ruby Mining (MRM), a joint venture between Mwriti Limitada, 25% of which is owned by retired General Raimundo Pachinuapa, and Gemfields (75%).

The news site Carta de Moçambique reported on 2 June 2021 that soldiers were intercepted trying to get out of Afungi with money believed to have been looted in Palma. It is believed that much of the money stolen has been seized and is in possession of senior officers.

#### **Assaults on Press Freedom and Freedom of Information:**

- The FDS have also been involved in egregious attacks against journalists that include forced disappearances and illegal detention. Ibrahim Abu Mbaruco from Palma district was last heard of on 7 April 2020. His family said that he called and said he was being surrounded by the FDS. There are no known cases opened by the PGR, Attorney-General Office, to investigate what happened to him.
- Amade Abubacar and Germano Adriano were detained in early 2019 and kept incommunicado and tortured at an army barracks in Mueda and were only released after internal and international pressure. They are both still awaiting trial.
- Journalist Estácio Valoi and Amnesty International activist David Matsinhe were held for several days in 2018, in the Chifuto village, in Mocimboa da Praia. They had their cameras and laptops impounded and never given back. They had authorisation to work in the area, but the FDS would have none of that.
- Hizidine Acha, a journalist working for the private television channel STV was briefly detained on 14 April 2020 by police, while covering a riot involving police and civilians. The police deleted all his video files.

#### **Private mercenaries**

An Amnesty International report claims that apart from the insurgents, government forces and the private military contractor, DAG have practiced atrocities against defenceless civilians. Accusations levelled against DAG involved firing machine guns mounted on helicopters and throwing grenades against anybody moving on the ground.<sup>9</sup> DAG reacted to accusations that it indiscriminately targeted civilians by saying that it was committed to human rights, while promising to conduct an internal investigation. Other private companies present in Cabo Delgado include SA-owned Paramount and Russian-owned Wagner group.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr41/3545/2021/en/>

The Rwandan government deployed 1,000 men to form a joint force, including 700 Rwandan special forces, as well as 300 police from elite units, in Cabo Delgado. According to Colonel Ronald Rwivanga, spokesman for the Rwandan army (Forces Rwandaises de Défense / RDF), the Rwandan contingent is made up of members of the police forces and troops specially trained "to confront terrorism and security-related problems."

This contingent is under the command of Major General Innocent Kabandana. Carta Moçambique reports: The Rwandan troop, which has been in Mozambique since July 9th to fight attacks in Cabo Delgado province, is led by the fearsome Major General Innocent Kabandana, known for assassinating opponents of Paul Kagame abroad. Information received indicates that Innocent Kabandana has already been in the United States of America (USA), Canada, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and some countries in Africa on missions to "exterminate" opponents of the Rwandan president. Since 2020, he has commanded the Military Academy of Rwanda.

For example, in the USA, where he worked for five years, he was responsible for the elimination of several Rwandan citizens, considered to be inconveniences to the current political system. In the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi, according to the Rwandan newspaper Great Lakes Post, he attacked native villages and killed refugees from the



Hutu ethnic group. In fact, in the 1990s, the Rwandan newspaper Jambo News claims, Kabandana was responsible for the murder of three bishops, nine priests, a believer and an eight-year-old child.<sup>10</sup> When the deployment was announced, the Government of Rwanda said that the "Joint Force" will work in "close collaboration" with the Armed Defense Forces of Mozambique (FADM) SADC forces "in designated sectors of responsibility". However, more recent information indicate that Rwandan troops were contracted by France for the restoration of security in Afungi and the creation of conditions for resuming work of construction of the LNG complex.<sup>11</sup>

At best, Rwanda is acting like another mercenary company. "There is no help here between states, Rwanda is acting as a force unto itself. It is going back to that problem that we have already denounced, which is from the "Iraqization" of Cabo Delgado", said Adriano Nuvunga, Executive Director of the CDD.<sup>12</sup> The concern of France and Rwanda is not solving violent extremism in Cabo Delgado, but "cleaning" the area around the Mozambique LNG project to allow work to resume. He continues, "it's not the question of human lives, or restoring peace and security to the population of Cabo Delgado. The question is to create conditions for the project of Total can move forward. And that means Iraqization", a new form in disguise to build a wall around that Afungi area".

Rwandan armed forces have long been accused of causing chaos in the east of the DRC, a country they successfully invaded twice – the second time, dubbed the Great African War, between 1998 and 2008, resulting in an estimated 5.5 million dead and their involvement in Mozambique is received with much skepticism and distrust.

<sup>10</sup> <https://cartamz.com/index.php/politica/item/8394-tropa-ruandesa-e-liderada-pelo-major-general-innocent-kabandana-conhecido-por-exterminar-opositores-de-kagame>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/rwandas-military-intervention-in-mozambique-raises-eyebrows/a-58957275>

<sup>12</sup> <https://dhpi.sacbc.org.za/rwandan-intervention-tensions-already-appearing/>

## SADC Forces

There is special concern about South African troops forming the largest contingent of the SADC deployment. In an interview with Deutsche Welle on 2 August, Prof. Andre Thomashausen said that

"South Africa's defense forces really carried out a mission that can only be considered a failure in the Democratic Republic of Congo. South African soldiers were known for their sexual violence against minors and women, for their habit of trying to steal and traffic in natural resources and, very tragically, for the very high level of HIV infection that caused so much misery in the region that South African forces practically occupied for years. They never wanted to withdraw, they are still there today".<sup>13</sup>

Thomashausen hopes that discipline will prevail. "Of course, South Africa is aware that its reputation is at stake and will do its utmost to ensure that the detachments act correctly and in accordance with the rules of international law for the resolution of armed conflicts. There can be no abuse against the civilian population".

A small battalion of South African troops, composed of special forces and unrelated to the SADC force, reportedly arrived in northern Mozambique on 22 July. The SADC mission, led by Major General Xolani Mankayi who led a controversial South African military mission in the Central African Republic, is, however, shrouded in secrecy, says the scholar.

## ASJW

The insurgency is local in its origins. Its members are mainly Mozambican nationals who hail from Cabo Delgado – although there are anecdotal reports of foreign nationals from neighbouring Tanzania. The perpetrators are mostly civilians. There is evidence from the past year of the recruitment of children through kidnappings during attacks.<sup>14</sup>

The insurgents have also been abducting women and young girls, who are then forced to live with them as wives or concubines. A new working paper by the Observatório do Meio Rural (OMR) reports that the insurgents have abducted hundreds of women, a fact that is confirmed by some of the women who managed to escape captivity.<sup>15</sup>

Most of the crimes perpetrated by the insurgents are gruesome, including beheadings. "We were attacked where we were. People were killed like flies. They were only killing men, but they now kill women too. They chop off our penises and decapitated us with machetes and bayonets," said an informant.

Dialogue was not an option in the past, with the Mozambican government claiming that the leaders of the insurgency were unknown. This is no longer the case. On 6 August 2021, the US State Department announced that it had identified the leaders of the insurgency.<sup>16</sup>

Bonomade Machude Omar, also known as Abu Sulayfa Muhammad and Ibn Omar, heads the Departments of Military and External Affairs of ISIS-Mozambique and serves as senior commander and main coordinator of all attacks carried out by the group in northern Mozambique, as well as main facilitator and channel of communication for the group. During the March 2021 attack on Palma, Omar led a group of fighters while Abu Yasir Hassan, the leader of ISIS-Mozambique, led another group of fighters, and Omar also led the attack on the Hotel Amarula in Palma. Omar was responsible for attacks in Cabo Delgado province, Mozambique, and the Mtwara region, Tanzania.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://p.dw.com/p/3yRxN>

<sup>14</sup> <https://cartamz.com/index.php/politica/item/6840-terrorismo-em-cabo-delgado-instituicoes-publicas-e-privadas-fechadas-em-nangade-a-pos-novos-ataques>

<sup>15</sup> <https://omrmz.org/omrweb/publicacoes/dr-130/> From the "faceless enemy" to the dialogue hypothesis

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.state.gov/designations-of-isis-mozambique-jnim-and-al-shabaab-leaders/>

The Centre for Investigative Journalism (CJI, 22 & 29 Sep) has published two articles in English about local insurgent leaders and how they gain support and protection. CJI identifies Bonomado Machude Omar (aka Ibn Omar) as the speaker in a March video that went viral, and is seen as a leader. His father was a teacher and local politician, and he attended a local secondary school in Mocimboa da Praia and gained high marks, before going abroad to study Islam. When he returned, he preached an extreme form of Islam and won support from some community leaders and local people.<sup>17</sup>

The other article is about Abdala Likonga (aka Alberto Shaki) from Mocimboa da Praia, who is said to be the "mastermind" of some of the insurgent offensives. He started trading and eventually opened a shop in Palma selling construction material and car parts. He was radicalised in Kenya and DRC. He faked his death and was involved in the 5 October 2017 attack on Mocimboa da Praia.<sup>18</sup>

IESE (Institute of Economic and Social Studies) identifies Andre Idrissa from Cogolo village, Pangane, on the coast of Macomia district as one of the first faces of Al Sabaab. His story is told in a fascinating and detailed investigation by Sergio Chichava, research director of IESE, in a 28 September report. The son of a local Sheik, Idrissa was born in 1986, and became a local businessman, selling basic goods and motorcycle parts he bought in Tanzania. He gained high social prestige. In his trade with Tanzania he was influenced by Wahhabi followers, and then more radical Tanzanian sheiks. He set up a local mosque in 2015 and attracted a following among local youth. He came into conflict with traditional mosques. He was part of the original attack on Mocimboa da Praia on 5 October 2017.

On 10 August 2021, the Observatorio do Meio Rural published a report identifying additional insurgency leaders.<sup>19</sup> Except for Bonomado Machude Omar, they identified the following:

### **Mustafá**

He is known to be Omar's executive, passing instructions on the ground from the commander. He is short in stature (about 1.55m tall). His mother tongue is Mwani and speaks Swahili fluently, and a little Portuguese. He was born in Mocimboa da Praia where he grew up and attended primary school. He lived in the Milamba neighborhood where he had a barbershop, being locally known by his Makonde nickname "Shinpwateka". He was seen in the attack on Palma de Março 2020, always acting close to Omar, transmitting orders, and identifying, among the captured people, those elements that, by their professional skills, could be important to the group, namely young people with completed military service, doctors, nurses, mechanics, or drivers.

### **Maulana Ali Cassimo**

Maulana is the first name of one of the most prominent commanders, according to individuals who have been in captivity, because he presents himself as an agronomist engineer. According to the witnesses, he is an intelligent individual, well-articulated in the Portuguese language, and with argumentative ability. Maulana is a light-skinned individual, about 1.70m tall. He is a native of the city of Lichinga, having completed the medium level course of Agriculture, at the Agrarian Institute there.

He is classified as "good student" by former teachers. He worked for the Mozambique Leaf Tobacco in Tete and Cuamba.

Allegedly, it was after being arrested by the police (for not having a driving license) that he entered the state public services. Between 2014 and 2017 he was a technician of Agrarian Extension at the SDAE of Mecula. Due to his involvement and dedication to his extension area, Maulana even won a provincial prize. He is described as charismatic and with much acceptance among producers. He was known among colleagues for being strict in Islamic precepts (praying five times a day) and for being professionally "active" and "agitated".

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<sup>17</sup> <https://cjimoz.org/news/bonomado-machude-omar-ou-ibn-omar-the-mozambican-face-of-terrorism-in-cabo-delgado/>.

<sup>18</sup> <https://cjimoz.org/news/lifting-of-the-fog-reveals-ring-leaders-behind-cabo-delgado-terrorism>

<sup>19</sup> <https://omrmz.org/omrweb/publicacoes/dr-130/> From the "faceless enemy" to the dialogue hypothesis

He is remembered for having demonstrated his anger at the attitude of the authorities towards artisanal miners (in Mariri, in the locality of Mbamba) and poachers in the Niassa Reserve. Colleagues highlight the vehemence with which he criticised the extortion of goods and the detention of young prospectors, justifying that agriculture is not a profitable activity and that young people did not have other alternatives. In defense of the miners, with whom he had relations, he confronted openly against the district authorities, including against the Administrator and Permanent Secretary.

From 2016 he became involved in the organization of a mosque and lost interest in his professional activity. The radicalization of the speech, including the prohibition of children from attending school, led to the closure of the mosque by the State. In this process he was prevented from using the SDAE's motorcycle (which he used in his religious activities) generating a great discontent and revolt. In July 2017 he left his job and was no longer seen in Mecula. Colleagues were informed that he had gone to Cabo Delgado to receive religious training, to later open a mosque in Mecula, where he would receive a subsidy of 60,000 meticaís, far higher than the salary he would receive from the State. With the beginning of the armed conflict, he joined the insurgents in the forests of Mocimboa da Praia, as did many other young people in Mecula. His wife still tried to join her husband in Cabo Delgado but was detained by police in the process; she is currently residing in Lichinga with her two children, as well as her husband's family. Maulana participated in the attacks on Mocimboa da Praia and Palma.

### **Rosa Cassamo**

Rosa Cassamo was born in Cabo Delgado, in a district unknown to us. Before joining the rebel group, she owned three huge machambas (farming plots). She is described as a light-skinned and beautiful woman, mother of five children, including three girls. Two of her daughters were prematurely married with insurgents and taken to the bush. Rosa was head of logistics in Ilala and Mucojo (Macomia district) and, through her husband's position, Ibraimo Mussa<sup>3</sup>, acquired local power and influence. Today she is considered a mother, among insurgents, playing an important role in mobilizing several women from her village to enter the insurgency. Among the rebels, Rosa is considered the "queen of black magic".

The insurgents have continued to abduct women and girls. Government troops have yet to come up with a strategy to liberate the women and girls, who are sexually abused by the insurgents, thus violating their human rights. "I've never seen anything like it, they're killing and taking our daughters to their bases to make them their wives," said a female informant. Furthermore, these abducted women and girls are forced into spying and recruiting for the insurgents. Another concern is that girls living in resettlement camps also are likely to be out of school, running the risk of child marriage and teenage pregnancies. And they are also likely to be subjected to other harmful practices. Reports are increasingly emerging of women and girls being asked to trade sex for aid assistance.<sup>20</sup>

## SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE DIMENSIONS OF THE CONFLICT



## THREATS TO IDPS



IDPs continue to face hardship and marginalization even after they have fled conflict. Most of those displaced have moved to Nampula, Niassa and Zambézia provinces and this has placed recipient cities and towns under immense pressure – particularly in Pemba and Montepuez.

For example, IDPs resettled in Montepuez sleep under the stars because the locals, who apparently hold title deeds to the land, will not allow them to build any type of housing, regardless of how flimsy it is. The locals charge a one-time "tax" to occupy the land, which varies from 500 to 1500 meticaïs. This is creating tension in the region, which might end up in further violence.

In Malica, Lichinga, the capital of Niassa, locals have been up in arms against the resettlement of internal displaced from Cabo Delgado. The situation is like a tinder box, with a likelihood of exploding at any moment.

The conflict in Cabo Delgado has also made it harder for the locals to access money via wire transfer services. The banks in the province no longer offer wire transfer services. The banks are simply following the Central Bank's directive which fears that insurgents could be using money wire transfer to finance their operations. However, this is something that government did not communicate to the larger population. As a result, people have to travel down south to neighbouring Nampula province (400 kilometers away) to access wire transfer services, which is an added burden because they have to spend some of the money on transport.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.thestandard.co.zw/2021/09/05/in-cabo-delgado-displaced-villagers-report-food-aid-traded-for-money-sex/>

The government has been slow in responding to the humanitarian needs, and in particular has delayed issuing visas for humanitarian experts needed in the region. In March 2021 Myrta Kaulard, the UN Resident Coordinator in Mozambique took to media<sup>21</sup> to decry the delays by government to issue visas for 57 humanitarian experts for Cabo Delgado, after four months of waiting. Non-UN agencies and NGOs have also reported similar blocks by government.

## POLITICAL AND COMMERCIAL INTERESTS IN OIL & GAS EXPLORATION IN CABO DELGADO FUELING VIOLENCE AND DISLOCATION

The Mozambique LNG project, headed by Total and which is headquartered in the Afungi Peninsula is worth \$20bn. Two other projects, Rovuma LNG and Coral LNG, both led by ExxonMobil and Eni, are also soon to be underway.

When the insurgency got closer to the project site, government (Ministries of National Defence and of the Interior) and Total signed a security agreement in August 2020 which the latter would provide funding and

logistical support for a Joint Task Force of Mozambican forces which would be tasked with defending the project, as reported by the media.<sup>22</sup> Under the agreement, Total would disburse funds to government which would then pay the troops tasked to protect the site in addition to their monthly salaries.

However, reports began surfacing that the generals in Maputo were siphoning off some of the funds. On 11 February 2021, the *Evidências* newspaper published an article in which it detailed how Police General Command and the Army General Command paid a small supermarket in Maputo 600 million meticaís (slightly over ten million US dollars in today's exchange rate) to provide foodstuff to the troops in Afungi. However, the supermarket management would then transfer the funds to private accounts.

The banks classified the financial activity as a "suspicious corruption and money laundering transaction". The contract with "Armazens Anita" was signed during the tenures of Atanásio Mtumuke and Basílio Monteiro, then National Defence and Interior Ministers, respectively. However, since the publishing of the exposé, the state has not started criminal proceedings against those who participated in the "suspicious corruption and money laundering transaction". Further reports from troops stationed was that they were not receiving the salaries intended for them from Total.

Oil and gas businesses require huge amounts of capital that most of the political elite possess. Hence, they practice rent-seeking by establishing companies, mostly in logistics, and entering into joint-ventures agreements with foreign investors.

However, there are also some interesting listings that are either a sole ownership or partnerships:

- Meridian Intelec Oil and Gas, Ltd. It's listed as a partnership between Intelec Holdings, Txuvuka Investimentos and Meridian Engineering and Constructions (Mozambique). The owner of Intelec Holdings is Salimo Abdala, a well-known businessman with links to former President Armando Guebuza, and a former Frelimo member of parliament. Prior to this, Intelec Holdings did not have an interest or experience in the oil and gas sector.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.newframe.com/the-lie-of-islamist-terrorists-in-cabo-delgado/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.africamonitor.net/en/opinio/am1264moz/>

- And so is the case of Florival Macave. He is a businessman with interests in the tourism sector. At one stage he was connected through marriage to Graça Machel's family. He has jumped onto the oil and gas bandwagon by setting up Genese Oil and Gas Moçambique. He is also currently the chairperson of Mozambique Oil and Gas Chamber of Commerce.

Cabo Delgado has enormous resources, chief among them are precious stones, heavy sands, gold, etc. Mining concessions have been issued to former and current ministers, generals, and businesspeople linked to the Mozambican political nomenclature. The NMR venture is such an example. Retired General Raimundo Pachinuapa held the land concessions for the Nhamanhumbir fields for quite some time, until locals discovered gemstones. That's when he started looking for a partner, ending up by selling 75% of his stake to Gemfields.

To start operations, NMR elicited government support, which sent troops to clear the area. The FDS forcefully and violently removed the locals from their own land. The locals have come out to complain about the violence meted out by the security forces. In April 2017, government sent the anti-riot unit to Nhamanhumbir which resulted in over 4000 artisanal miners and community members being driven out. The then district attorney, Pompilio Xavier Wazamguja, accused the FDS for reported deaths of artisanal miners during the raids, saying, "It's only our forces who use guns, not the miners. Some members of the security forces will be prosecuted and sentenced."

Residents are not in doubt as to what is happening: "What we hear is that they're protecting the businesses of the big generals", said one respondent.

The current Attorney-General, Beatriz Buchili, visited Montepuez on 21 April 2016 and promised an investigation. Fast forward to 2021, and it is not clear whether such an investigation ever took place for no findings were ever published. However, over 200 Mozambicans sued Gemfields in a United Kingdom court over claims of human rights abuses in the NMR mine. Although Gemfields denied the allegations, it decided to settle out of court paying 5.8 million Pounds Sterling.

## FORCED DISLOCATIONS

It is the contention of many of the IDPs interviewed for this report that they are being displaced so that their land can be given to either multinational companies or the local elites. In an interview with academic and researcher Yussuf Adam said that displaced people told him, the objective is "serving to exile them from their lands without paying them compensation."<sup>23</sup> The precedent set in Montepuez and other places make it difficult to refute these reports.

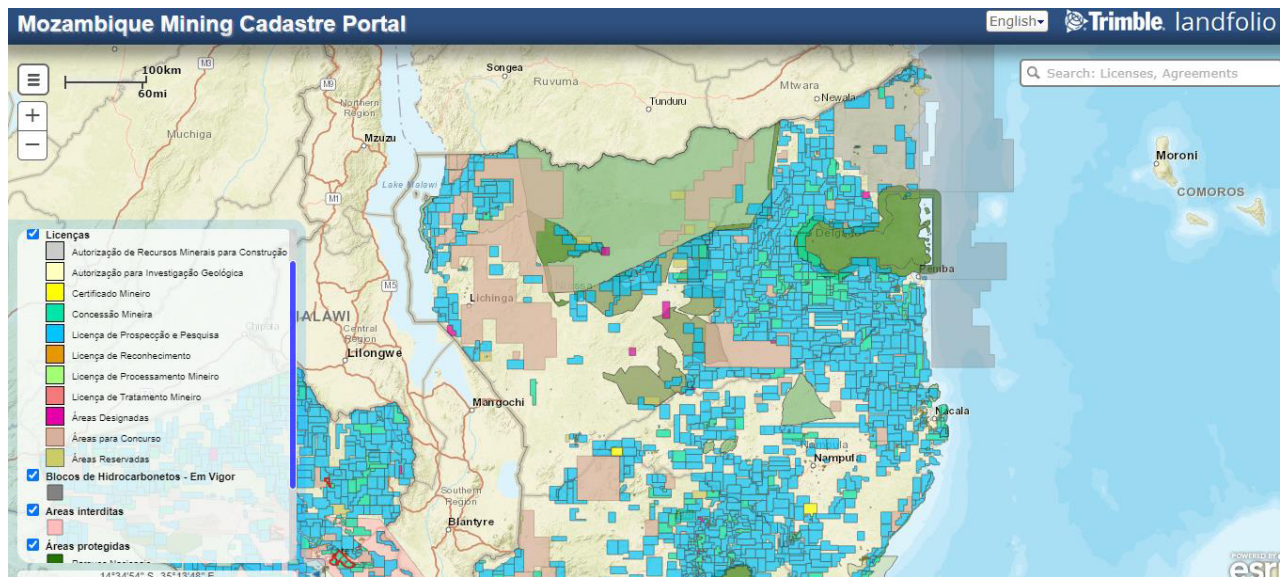
Locals from the north of Cabo Delgado have consistently said that the narrative of "Islamic Jihadism" is a smokescreen – that the real agenda is to drive them off their land, so that the land can be given to prospectors and investors. Their suspicions are not without justification. All land in Mozambique belongs to the State. Those occupying the land are given a "permission to occupy", known by the Portuguese acronym "DUAT". The State can withdraw the DUAT of the current occupant at will, and give it to another entity, without giving reasons and without compensation.

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<sup>23</sup> Personal Interview 28 May 2021



A map released by the Mozambican government shows which land has been given on concession to prospectors, investors and mining companies.<sup>24</sup> Below is a screenshot. It shows that the entire Cabo Delgado (except for nature conservation areas) as well as the entire Nampula Province (with the exception of the areas around Nampula City) has been given to prospectors and investors. On the map below, all the blue areas are mining and prospecting concessions. The map is interactive – on the website, by clicking on a specific concession, it says who the concession has been granted to.



Source: Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy

The implications are disturbing. The entire population of Cabo Delgado, and most of the rural population of Nampula Province, will eventually have to be moved, to make way for prospectors and mining. Reports have been received of displaced persons from the north of Cabo Delgado who have had their DUATs cancelled when they arrived in Pemba. Further reports were received of displaced persons arriving in Nampula. When they are issued with new DUATs, they are told to say that they came from Pemba, not from Palma or Mocimboa da Praia. This means that they will never be able to return to their places of origin, even if the fighting stops.

Who stands to profiteer from this massive land grab? A study published by the Center for Public Integrity (CPI) concluded that Raimundo Domingos Pachinuapa, a veteran of the national liberation struggle and a Frelimo member, and Asghar Fakhraleali hold the largest number of mining concessions in Cabo Delgado province. Overall, the study looks for the real "lords of mining exploration licenses in Cabo Delgado" and found that the company Mwiriti Mining, Limitada, legally owned by Raimundo Domingos Pachinuapa (60%) and Asghar Fakhraleali (40%), presents as the company with the largest number of mining concessions in Cabo Delgado (7%).<sup>25</sup>

"The second company with the largest concessions, 4% of the total, is Cabo Delgado Inertes e Minerais, Sociedade Unipessoal, Limitada, owned by Macara Samido. Concessions from Mwiriti Mining (Ltd) are

<sup>24</sup> The map can be found at <https://portals.landfolio.com/mozambique/pt/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.cipmoz.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Quanto-e-como-gasta-o-Estado-com-a-guerra-de-Cabo-Delgado-1.pdf>

intended for the exploration of gold in the district of Montepuez and the concessions of Cabo Delgado Inertes and Minerals, Sociedade Unipessoal, Limitada are intended for the exploration of construction stone and sand in the districts of Palma, Mecufi, Pemba and Metuge", reports the study. However, CIP's investigation noted that Mwiriti Mining has indirect stakes in other projects, such as the exploration of rubies, through Montepuez Ruby Mining.

There are 113 mining concessions in Cabo Delgado, held by 83 companies. Of the total concessions, the report states that the company Mwiriti Mining Limitada holds eight mining concessions, which means that it alone controls 7% of the total concessions in the province of Cabo Delgado.<sup>26</sup> There was a sharp increase in the number of licenses granted for mining projects in Cabo Delgado in the last four years. In the 14 years prior to the attacks in the province, 67 licenses were granted - an average of five per year. On the other hand, only from 2017 to February 2021, in the midst of armed conflict, 46 mining projects were licensed - more than double the average number of concessions in the "years of peace". Compared to the previous 14 years, the number of concessions increased by 68% in the four years of attacks.

A considerable number of the companies identified have their tax domicile in Mauritius, which is a tax haven in SADC. This is even the case of companies Mwiriti Mining (Ltd), owned by Raimundo Domingos Pachinuapa and Asghar Fakhraleali with registration outside Mozambique. A large part of the mining concessions in Cabo Delgado is in the hands of three companies, whose beneficial ownership was not possible to identify. "Of the 113 mining concessions in the province, 7% belong to the company Nairoto Resources, 5% to Gemfields Mauritius, and 4% are held by Kukwira." The first two companies are registered in Mauritius, the last one was registered in Mozambique.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The origins of the insurgency in Cabo Delgado cannot be pinpointed to a single factor but rather an explosive mixture, namely, the exploitation of resources, youth radicalisation, lack of jobs and opportunities and police brutality, which have all led to the conditions for the emergence of the insurgency.

Unfortunately, government has also been unable to adequately quell the insurgency on its own. FDS behaviour when dealing with civilians has also worsened the situation. There are many examples of egregious acts committed by troops that are a dereliction of duty. Yet, authorities continue to look the other way, and take disciplinary measures. This is likely to worsen as military operations escalate in the region and SADC and Rwandan troops have entered the fray.

- In Montepuez, government's decision to send in anti-riot units to force out artisanal miners as well as the local population to make way for NMR was seen as unhelpful and contributing to the escalation of violence and the subsequent humanitarian drama, and the recruitment process<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.cipmoz.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Quanto-e-como-gasta-o-Estado-com-a-guerra-de-Cabo-Delgado-1.pdf>  
<sup>27</sup> <https://www.theafricareport.com/79096/how-mozambiques-corrupt-elite-caused-tragedy-in-the-north/>

- Also, seemingly there are government officials who are taking advantage of the conflict to enrich themselves. The case of both the army and police making a contract with a supermarket for the provision of foodstuff with the money ending up in private bank accounts suggests that corrupt practices have become generalised within government ranks, which is likely to continue fuelling the conflict.

The insurgents have been abducting women and girls to use them as wives and concubines, as well as for preparing meals and other chores. This is clearly in the realm of sexual abuse and gender-based violence. Government has yet to comment on what it is doing to ensure that civilians, especially women and girls are protected.

Furthermore, because these women and girls are forced into recruiting and spying for the insurgents, they are likely to suffer further abuses from the hands of government forces should they be captured in order to force them to confess aiding and abetting the insurgents

- Girls in resettlement camps are out of school. In such camps they are likely to suffer abuses, be forced to marry or go into prostitution to help feed their families who because of displacement have no means of earning a livelihood, and even fall pregnant.
- The practise of trading sex for food assistance is on the rise and further aggravates the violence perpetrated against women and girls.

The humanitarian crisis continues unabated with little help from the government who have been delaying the issuance of visas for humanitarian workers. What can be made of government's behaviour is that it wants to continue with its policy of keeping out from the warzone all outside observers, notably journalists, researchers and aid workers.

- The media crackdown and blanket prohibition for travelling into conflict areas has all but ensured that journalists cannot tell the world what is happening in such areas, and neither can they verify atrocities and war crimes meted out against defenseless and hapless civilians.

Communities who have been forced to flee the violence in Cabo Delgado feel that that they have been forced off their lands to make way for mining projects. This perception is fueled by the by government's authorization of either mineral prospecting or construction for mineral resource projects. It is likely that popular malcontent about this could also be fueling the insurgency.

Meanwhile, in some of the resettlement areas land issues and aid distribution are likely to be a potential source for hostilities between the local hosting communities and the internal displaced<sup>28</sup>.

- Government has been using the constitutional mandate that land belongs to it to temporarily resettle IDPs on land belonging to local communities who have rights according to customary norms and practices (recognised and enshrined in the Constitution).

In some places, the local hosting communities view IDPs with resentment, especially because emergency aid is only distributed to them, excluding the natives who are themselves not faring better, according to renowned journalist Tomás Vieira Mário<sup>29</sup>. This is the case in Lichinga, in Niassa, where, in May 2021, a machete-carrying crowd blocked a process of land occupation by IDPs which had been

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<sup>28</sup> STV news, 23 May 2021

<sup>29</sup> Facebook, 24 May 2021.

made available by government apparently without consultation and consent of the local communities and land holders. This seems to be a complex challenge, and government needs to work in partnership with humanitarian organisations to ensure the equitable distribution of aid assistance in ways that include the concerns and needs of local hosting communities.

IDPs also face huge challenges with accessing money through wire transfers. Those with relatives overseas are struggling to access monies wired via wire transfer services. Government might have been secretly forcing banks not to make payments, yet there has not been a notification from the Central Bank advising on such transactions. Government, wary of creating opportunities for insurgents to receive funding support from overseas, has decided to clamp down on wire transfer services. However, law abiding citizens are being denied a source of income, further exacerbating their plight.

The suspension of operations by Total could mean the freezing of logistics operations for most Mozambican companies that were set up to benefit from the oil and gas windfall. This may also disturb operations to fund Frelimo. Most businesspeople pay their dues to fund the ruling party's political machinery, begging the question what, if any, impact it will have on the 2024 elections.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings of this report, the following recommendations are being made to the Government of Mozambique, the leaders of the Southern African Development Community, African leaders in the AU and the international community – particularly the EU, France, Portugal, and the US – who have all become more engaged in Cabo Delgado's humanitarian and security crisis.

**- The military solution envisaged for returning security to the region is short-sighted, problematic and insufficient on its own.**

- Prevent the "Iraqification" of Cabo Delgado: security of the entire region – not just gas infrastructure – must be prioritised to prevent the creation of safe enclaves that work to the benefit of extractive industries.
- Instil troop discipline so that government forces – be they FADM, SADC, Rwandan or others – are not themselves perpetrators of unnecessary violence and committing human rights violations. This includes SGBV violations, of which both Rwandan and SA troops have a history of in the DRC.
- Form accountability mechanisms that make it easy and safe for civilian victims to report violations perpetrated by government forces. The Government of Mozambique should ensure force agreements with SADC, Rwandan and other forces, include provisions that commit countries to successfully prosecuting offenders, ensuring reparations to victims so that they have access to justice.
- Develop a clear plan to engage regional and international partners: to first train the disciplined troops who can protect populations and beat back the growing insurgency; second, to improve its intelligence gathering systems to monitor the movement of insurgents; third, to identify flow of resources to finance the insurgency operations; fourth, to tighten border security to stop insurgents from crossing borders unhindered; fifth to share logistical and operational support from partners. This may entail working more closely with SADC.

**- Embark on a political track as soon as possible – to ensure lasting peace:** until recently, insurgents were considered to be 'faceless' and 'nameless', closing the possibility of a political track. However, with more information about key individuals in the insurgency that has recently come to light, it is imperative for the Government of Mozambique to embark on political tracks to resolve the conflict. Support from regional and continental partners, and the international community is key to ensuring this process comes to fruition.

**- Address the special needs of civilians brought about by the humanitarian crisis:** Ensuring that the humanitarian needs of the people caught up in the conflict entails:

- **Ensuring that visas for humanitarian workers** are expedited and that equipment is not delayed by port authorities and at border controls.
- **Recognising the special needs of women and girls who are disproportionately affected by the conflict:** ensure their protection especially in IDP camps, end aid for sex practises, and ensure the psycho-social support necessary for victims of rape, forced marriages and sexual slavery. Ensure that women and girls continue to receive an education so that they don't fall prey to cyclical poverty and have a future to look forward to.

- **Ensuring the full implementation of the Kampala Convention:** which addresses internal displacement caused by armed conflict, natural disasters and large-scale development projects in Africa.
- **Working with humanitarian partners to ensure that they are able to safely and equitably distribute assistance to those in need:** ensuring that this process is driven by humanitarian organisations. This gives all civilians the best chance of receiving assistance on merit without politicisation.
- **Government must also draw up plans to ensure that once safety is restored to the region, IDPs will be able to safely return** to their places of origin, and that they can recover whatever of their properties are still standing.

- **Government must ensure greater transparency of ownership** of those companies who have been awarded prospecting rights on land in Cabo Delgado to ensure that political elites do benefit from economic developments where there are conflicts of interest. It must also significantly scale up its efforts to investigate and prosecute corrupt and criminal behaviour – especially when they are linked to the tendering process of land and concession rights in Cabo Delgado. This will ensure that more benefits accrue to communities who have for too long been marginalised and left impoverished.

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