Security provision and governance in fragile resource-rich settings: Lessons from Cabo Delgado, Mozambique

By Stephen Buchanan-Clarke, Erika Van Der Merwe

RESEARCH REPORT

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COVER PHOTO: Rwandan soldiers patrol a street near Palma, Cabo Delgado, Mozambique.

Photo: Simon Wohlfahrt / AFP

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List of Acronyms

ACLED – Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
ASWJ – Al-Sunnah Wa Jama'ah (insurgent group in Cabo Delgado)
AU – African Union
CAR – Central African Republic
CAT – Convention against Torture
CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CERD – International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CMW – International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD – Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DAG – Dyck Advisory Group (private military company)
DRC – Democratic Republic of Congo
EIF – Entry Into Force
EU – European Union
FADM – Forças Armadas de Defesa de Moçambique (Mozambique Defense Armed Forces)
FL – Força Local (community self-defense groups)
GPA – General Peace Agreement
ICC – International Criminal Court
ICCPR – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICMM – International Council for Mining and Metals
ICMM – International Council for Mining and Metals
ICoCA – International Code of Conduct Association (for Private Security Providers)
IDP – Internally Displaced Person
IED – Improvised Explosive Device
IHL – International Humanitarian Law
IRMA – Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance
IRMA – Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance
ISCAP – Islamic State Central Africa Province
ISM – Islamic State Mozambique
ISO – International Organization for Standardization (ISO 18788 for PSC operations)
LNG – Liquefied Natural Gas
MoI – Ministry of the Interior (Mozambique)
MRM – Montepuez Ruby Mining Limitada
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
OAU – Organization of African Unity
OPCW – Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
PMC – Private Military Company
PRM – Polícia da República de Moçambique (Mozambique Republican Police)
PSC – Private Security Company
RDF – Rwandan Defence Force
RNP – Rwanda National Police
RSF – Rwandan Security Forces
SADC – Southern African Development Community
SADC – Southern African Development Community
SAMIM – SADC Mission in Mozambique
UIR – Unidade de Intervenção Rápida (Rapid Intervention Unit)
UN – United Nations
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
UNGP – UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
UNODA – United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
VPI – Voluntary Principles Initiative
VPI – Voluntary Principles Initiative
VPs / VPSHR – Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights

Figure 1: Map of Mozambique

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province demonstrates how large-scale extractive investment projects amid complex security governance environments can continually reshape risk. Global demand for minerals and gas has drawn sustained investor interest in Cabo Delgado's graphite, rubies and Liquid Natural Gas (LNG). This has resulted in a high-stakes interdependence between private capital, state security provision, and community protection in one of Mozambique's most fragile regions. The intersection of these dynamics has produced a hybrid security environment in which formal, auxiliary, and private actors operate side by side, often with uneven accountability and variable human rights performance.

This report aims to map the principal security providers surrounding key mining and energy assets in Cabo Delgado, assessing their mandates, practices, and relationships. This was done to analyse the effects of these arrangements on local communities, particularly women and children, who often bear disproportionate harm from conflict-related abuses. The research combined desk-based analysis of primary and secondary sources with interviews across civil society, industry, and policy stakeholders. Several limitations of the report should be noted. Cabo Delgado's security landscape remains fluid, with operational secrecy, contracting opacity, and fast-moving events occasionally constraining the verification of information. Access to primary data in certain high-risk localities was limited by security and logistical considerations. Where attribution was contested, this report privileges convergent findings across multiple credible sources.

Three observations recur across the evidence contained in this report. First, extractive operations depend on multilayered security arrangements that include national forces, allied deployments, and private providers. However, the delineation of roles is often unclear to local communities. Second, grievances related to land acquisition, employment expectations, and the distribution of security costs and benefits continue to fuel protests and opportunistic criminal activity around mining sites. Third, protection risks for civilians, especially women, girls, and increasingly boys, intensify when responses are heavily kinetic and when humanrights due diligence is treated as a compliance exercise rather than operational risk control.

The implications of these findings are salient for both investors and operators. Where community policing mechanisms and accessible grievance channels exist, tensions tend to de-escalate more rapidly. Where they do not, formal force is asked to fill governance gaps for which it is neither structured nor trained, which increases risk exposure. Equally, clear interfaces between public forces and private security, anchored in lawful useofforce standards and auditable Standard Operating Procedures, are essential to prevent mandate drift.

This report therefore recommends that government and operators jointly standardise community relations and security governance in concession areas through four mutually reinforcing actions. Namely: embed humanrights due diligence through the full lifecycle of projects; formalise public–private coordination frameworks; resource survivor-centred protection services in areas of operation; and link benefitsharing to verifiable local procurement and livelihood programmes. Doing so can reduce operational volatility in Cabo Delgado, lower the likelihood of rights-violating incidents, and enhance investor confidence without externalising risk onto vulnerable communities.

1. INTRODUCTION

Across Africa, two powerful trends are unfolding in tandem: a rise in conflict and fragility, and a surge of investment in mineral extraction driven by the escalating global demand for green energy solutions and the critical minerals they require. Intensifying competition for resources such as natural gas, cobalt, lithium, graphite, and rare earth elements is drawing mining companies into increasingly high-risk regions. These environments are often characterised by weak state institutions, socio-economic marginalisation, and complex political dynamics.

In such contexts, the state's security presence is frequently limited or contested, creating space for a wide range of security actors, from national military and police forces to private security companies, community-based protection groups, and, in some cases, non-state armed actors. This multiplicity of actors, each with different mandates, levels of accountability, and relationships to local populations, makes effective security sector governance in these contexts exceptionally challenging.

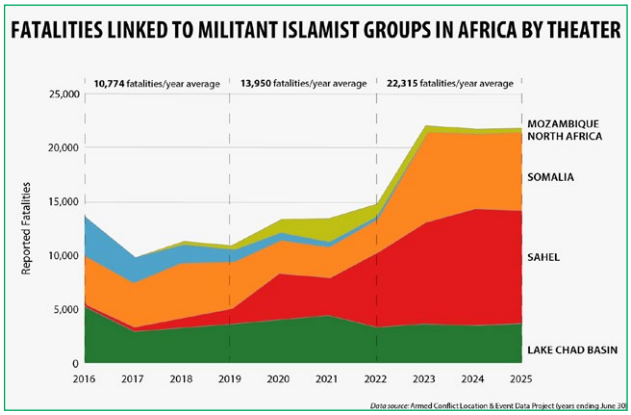
For companies operating in these environments, the presence of multiple, and sometimes competing, security actors, including state forces, private contractors, and non-state armed groups, raises the risk of being implicated in human rights abuses, which can trigger legal liabilities, sanctions, and reputational harm in global markets. Poor security sector governance can also inflame community grievances and social tensions, potentially sparking protests, violence, and negatively impacting companies' social license to operate and operational continuity.

The impact on communities themselves can be equally severe. Overlapping and often competing mandates among security actors frequently lead to inconsistent protection, selective enforcement, and in some cases, direct abuses of power. Communities may face harassment, arbitrary detention, or violence from security actors meant to safeguard them, while the absence of clear accountability mechanisms may leave little recourse for justice. Economic and social life is further disrupted when security actors impose informal taxes, restrict movement, or control access to land and resources. Over time, such dynamics erode public trust in both state and private institutions, entrench local grievances, and heighten the risk of long-term instability. Moreover, in contexts where violent non-state armed groups operate, unaddressed local grievances can render individuals and communities susceptible to recruitment and/or radicalisation.

Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, provides a stark example of these dynamics. The province's vast natural gas and mineral resources have attracted significant foreign investment, yet the region has been gripped by violent insurgency, displacing communities and disrupting production. Multiple security actors operate in this environment, each with varying degrees of coordination, legitimacy, and accountability, making it an important case for understanding the interplay between security provision and governance in fragile resource-rich settings.

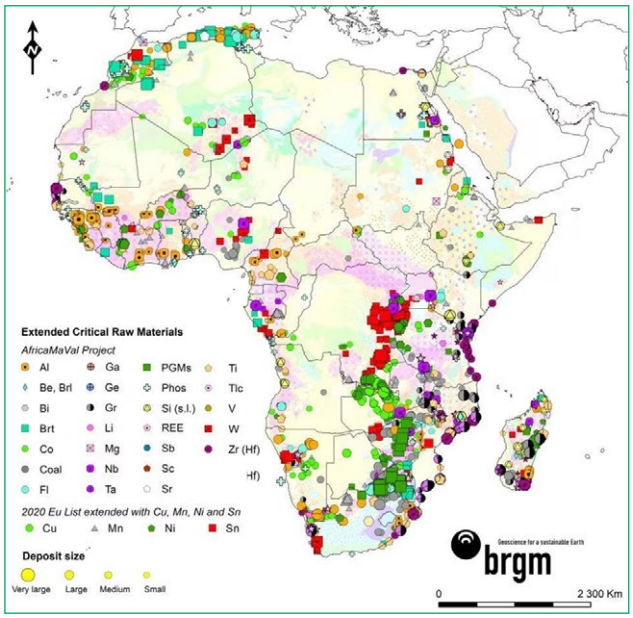
This study examines these challenges through a hybrid security lens, acknowledging the complex interplay between state and non-state actors in Cabo Delgado's security provision. Its objective is to offer deeper insight and practical guidance for fostering more inclusive security arrangements – those capable of better ensuring long-term stability and prosperity in the region.

Figure 2: African Conflict Trajectories by Region | 2017 - 2025[1]



1 Source: Adapted from Africa Centre for Strategic Studies (2024). The Evolution of Africa's Militant Islamist Groups. Data sourced from Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (June 2016 – June 2025).

Figure 3: Map of Critical Raw Materials Deposits in Africa[2]



1.1 DEFINING HYBRID SECURITY GOVERNANCE

Hybrid security arrangements emerge in contexts of 'limited statehood'[3], where state institutions are either unable or unwilling to assert exclusive authority over security, development, and rule enforcement. In such environments, non-state actors, ranging from private security companies (PSCs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community organisations, and militias, step in to fill gaps in state provisions.[4] A significant body of scholarly literature has engaged with the evolving role of non-state actors in security governance, particularly within Africa's extractives sector. Enns, Andrews, and Grant (2020), for instance, argue that this hybridisation is not only a response to weakness but also reflects a reconfiguration of authority shaped by global capital, donor influence, and local socio-political dynamics.[5] Today, security services in the extractives sector are commonly delivered through secondments of police officers or military personnel, along with various types of partnerships between government security forces, PSCs, community groupings, and other stakeholders, such as NGOs. These partnerships are often presented as necessary to achieving and maintaining security and encouraged by global initiatives like the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights.[6]

While these arrangements can indeed help to fill critical security gaps, there is an inherent risk pertaining to who benefits and how security priorities are determined. Evidence indicates that those living in communities near extraction can grow increasingly insecure as more actors and resources are enrolled in the process of securing mining sites.[7] This may be the result of limited resources being prioritised for the protection of mining interests, or the unintended disassembly of pre-existing local security arrangements and resilience mechanisms. Moreover, outsourcing security provision to non-state actors can ultimately weaken the state's ability to establish a monopoly on the use of force, which is a prerequisite for broad-based development

Hybrid security arrangements that include government security forces, therefore, should include a responsibility to continue serving the public interest and deliver security as a public good, even if this happens alongside other security tasks such as securing extractive operations on behalf of private companies. Sustainable hybrid security arrangements should ultimately provide additional security for communities near sites of extraction. This does not just serve communities but is also in the interests of private security firms by helping to ensure they are not responsible for adverse impacts on local communities that could pose reputational risks or affect their social license to operate.

1.2 TYPES OF HYBRID SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS

Security is a cornerstone of social order, rooted in the universal human desire for safety. Individuals and communities alike seek protection not only from harm inflicted by others but also from potential violence or coercion by political authorities. Meeting this need involves both state and non-state actors establishing rules governing the use of force, shaped by diverse laws, norms, and belief systems. These rules must be applied impartially and perceived as fair, making justice an inseparable aspect of security.

2 Source: French Geological Survey (BRGM) https://www.brgm.fr/en
3 Krasner, S., Risse, T. (2014). External Actors, State-Building, and Service Provision in Areas of Limited Statehood: Introduction., Vol 27, No.4., P. 548.
4 Colona, F., & Jaffe, R. (2016). Hybrid governance arrangements. European Journal of Development Research, 28, 175–183.
5 Enns, C., Andrews, J.N.,Grant, A. (2020). Security for whom? Analysing hybrid security governance in Africa's extractive sectors, *International Affairs*, Volume 96, Issue 4, P. 995–1013; Hendrickse, R. (2024). Hybrid governance in selected African countries: a conceptual debate and literature review. International Journal of Business Ecosystem and Strategy., 6 (4); 361-372.
6 Voluntary Principles Initiative. (2000). *Voluntary principles on security and human rights.*
7 Colona and Jaffa (2016).

Figure 4: Common Types of Hybrid Security Arrangements[8]

HYBRID SECURITY ARRANGEMENT / ACTOR	DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL OUTCOMES FOR SECURITY
Elite capture of state institutions	State officials use positions for personal or political gain, including corruption, political control, or criminal activity. May form alliances with private or informal security actors to avoid accountability.	Undermines accountability, transparency, and public trust; enables corruption.
Commercial actors	Businesses require security and may rely on state forces, hire private security, or develop in-house systems. They can operate within legal frameworks and have positive spill-overs to nearby communities, but may also distort state security provision through lobbying, collusion, or illegal practices.	May enhance stability and security provision if aligned with regulations; risk of undermining state authority or harming others if self-interest dominates.
Community self-protection	Local groups form to protect members based on geography, identity, or activity. These groups are not primarily profit-driven and may cooperate with state security, but can turn criminal or political if motivated by power or profit. Forms range from neighbourhood watches to militias.	Can fill security gaps and improve safety for members; risk of exclusionary or abusive practices, escalation into criminal or political violence.
Criminality	Organised and petty crime use violence to create predictable conditions for illicit activity. Criminal groups may collude with state or hybrid actors while circumventing laws.	Undermines rule of law, increases violence, and can corrupt state institutions; may create fragile "order" benefiting criminal interests.
Politically motivated violence	Armed insurgents, rebels, or extremist groups use violence to impose alternative governance and challenge state authority. May co-opt community self-protection groups for legitimacy.	Can destabilise governance, displace communities, and erode state legitimacy.

2. FINDINGS FROM MOZAMBIQUE

2.1 ABOUT CABO DELGADO

Cabo Delgado, Mozambique's roughly 82m 625km² northernmost province, is home to about 2.27 million people – roughly 8.4% of the country's population.[9] The province has historically faced significant economic and geographical isolation, which has resulted in limited infrastructure and investment, and socio-economic indicators that lag national averages: life expectancy is 52.6 years (vs 55.7 nationally), infant mortality 74.4 per 1,000 live births (vs 65.1 nationally), illiteracy rates are 52.4% (vs 39.9 nationally), and multidimensional poverty is around 60.6% (vs 45.3% nationally). Access to services is low, with only 21.9% of the population having access to health facilities and 12% of households electrified. The province's youth population has been growing rapidly, with more than 65% of its residents being under the age of 25.[10] This rapid growth has outstripped opportunities for upward social mobility, with a large portion of the economically active population being engaged in subsistence agriculture or informal trade, which has been especially vulnerable to climate shocks and the impacts of conflict and insecurity. The province is ethnically diverse, primarily Makonde, Mwani, and Makua/Macua, with Islam predominant along the coast and substantial Christian (especially Catholic) communities inland.[11] Its economy combines smallholder agriculture (notably cashew, sesame, cassava) and fisheries

8 *Adapted from Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance. (2023). Hybrid Security: Challenges and Opportunities for Security Sector Reform; Insights from Burkina Faso, Colombia & DRC.*

9 Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE). (2019). *IV Recenseamento Geral da População e Habitação 2017: Resultados definitivos*. Maputo: INE.

10 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2021). *Cabo Delgado provincial profile*. Maputo: UNDP Mozambique.

11 Sousa Santos, A.M.. (2024). Growing Apart: The Historical Construction of Difference in Northern Cabo Delgado, Mozambique. Kronos, 50(1), 1-20. https://doi.org/10.17159/2309-9585/2024/v50a14

with major extractives, including offshore deposits of liquid natural gas (LNG), rubies, graphite, and smaller deposits of gold, heavy sands, and other industrial stones.[12] Informal artisanal mining is also a significant source of livelihoods in some areas of the province.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF MAJOR MINING OPERATIONS IN THE PROVINCE

Cabo Delgado's extractive sector hosts three headline mining projects. This includes the Montepuez Ruby Mining project operated by British company Gemfields in partnership with a local firm known as Mwiriti. The second is Syrah Resources' Balama Graphite project, currently one of the world's largest graphite mines that forms part of critical supply chains for battery anode and electric vehicle markets. There is also TotalEnergies' multi-billion-dollar LNG project on the Afungi Peninsula, where recoverable gas reserves are estimated to amount to 100 trillion cubic feet. Valued at $20 billion, it is Africa's largest energy investment to date. While these projects have attracted significant foreign capital and raised expectations for socio-economic growth in Cabo Delgado, they have also accentuated longstanding grievances around land dispossession and environmental degradation.

The following cases are three among several incidents to have occurred in Cabo Delgado over the last decade, which highlight the significant risks inherent in hybrid security arrangements, where companies rely on state forces or a combination of public and private security actors to protect operations in fragile environments.

2.2.1 Alleged Human Rights Violations at Afungi Peninsula

In 2020, a leading multinational energy company announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Mozambique regarding the security of Mozambique LNG project activities. The MoU established a Joint Task Force, consisting of FADM and PRM personnel. The agreement included support for the JTF's accommodation, food, and equipment, and a bonus to be paid, conditional on any potential violation of human rights.

Allegations first publicly reported by *Politico* outline how members of the Mozambican security forces deployed to the area following major attacks in Palma in mid-2021 were involved in serious human rights violations.[13] Government security forces allegedly detained a large group of fleeing villagers, accused them of insurgency ties, and separated men from women and children. The women were reportedly humiliated and subjected to sexual violence, while the men were confined in shipping containers under inhumane conditions; only around 26 of an estimated 180 to 250 people survived.

The incident is the subject of an ongoing criminal investigation launched by Mozambique's Attorney General in March 2025, supported by the National Human Rights Commission. The lead multinational energy company and its consortium partners have denied any knowledge of the events and that the company had no presence on the ground at the time of the alleged incidents, having handed over the site to Mozambican security forces after declaring *force majeure*.

If proven true, these allegations could expose the project to legal liability and reputational harm, undermine investor confidence, and generate new grievances among communities in the area. The incident raises critical questions around responsibility and accountability in hybrid security environments.[14]

2.2.2 Governance Risks in the Gemfields–Mozambique Security Operations

In 2014-2015, journalists began reporting cases of excessive force and human rights violations by security forces at the Montepuez Ruby Mining Limitada's (MRM's) mine in Montepuez, Cabo Delgado (a joint venture with Gemfields).[15] These reports laid the groundwork for a lawsuit representing 273 Mozambican claimants filed in London, alleging severe abuses by both state actors and private security personnel at the site, including beatings, shootings, sexual assault, unlawful detentions, and forced labour.

12 United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2020). *Mozambique: Cabo Delgado socio-economic baseline assessment*. Washington, DC: USAID.
13 Perry, A. (2024, September 26). *"All must be beheaded": Revelations of atrocities at French energy giant's African stronghold*.
14 See: Buchanan-Clarke, S. (2025). Strengthening security sector governance in fragilre jurisdictions: The Role of the private sector. Intelligence Report. Good Governance Africa.
15 Al Jazeera English. (2015, December 10). *Mozambique's Gem Wars* [Video]. Africa Investigates, Al Jazeera

In early 2019, Gemfields agreed to a settlement of roughly £5.8 million (approximately USD 7.8 million) to provide compensation, support agricultural and training initiatives, and establish an independent operational grievance mechanism. The company did not admit liability but acknowledged that violence had occurred.[16] The MRM case underscores some of the risks of partnering with state security institutions and the importance of proactive human rights due diligence to identify and address risks early in high-risk operating environments.

2.2.3 Balama

In 2024, the Balama graphite mining operation in Cabo Delgado's Balama district – operated by Syrah Resources – was forced to temporarily shut down in response to violent protest action, with the company declaring a force majeure under its mining agreement in December. These protests impeded access to the site and slowed mining operations. Subsequent wider national unrest triggered by contested general elections in October further complicated the resumption of operations and the ability of local authorities to restore site access.[17]

The dispute is reported to stem from how farming and agricultural lands were allocated (or re-allocated) when the mine development moved forward in the region. Some local farmers say their livelihoods, agriculture and land access have been negatively affected by the mine's footprint, and they feel the resettlement or mitigation processes have not been satisfactorily addressed. Some landowners claim they were displaced (or cleared) and not provided adequate new farmland or compensation.[18]

Engagements with former employees at Syrah Resources and a review of the company's community engagement strategies show that significant efforts were taken to ensure good practise in resettlement and community engagement (formal agreements, committees, livelihood programmes, and local employment). The Company's stakeholder engagement plan also describes the development of Local Development Committees to ensure the Company's "Social License to Operate", including the convening of quarterly community health, safety, and security meetings.[19] However, the persistence of grievances around land-quality, compensation timeliness, and community expectations points to the fact that, in practice, even well-designed processes often cannot completely mitigate the risk to a firm's social license to operate in complex and fluid security environments.

2.3 CONFLICT EMERGENCE

From approximately 2010, small groups of radicalised youth who rejected traditional Islamic leadership, social norms, and state authority emerged through Mosques and madrasas across Cabo Delgado – most prominently in Mocimboa da Praia but also in Balama, Chiure, and Macomia. Their emergence led to growing community tensions and isolated clashes with state security forces. In October 2017, coordinated attacks on police stations in Mocímboa da Praia signalled the early emergence of a more consolidated group, *Ahlu Sunnah wa Jamaah* (ASWJ)[20], intent on waging an armed insurgency.

In its early years, the group lacked a clear identity, with militants rarely issuing public statements beyond limited appeals to austere interpretations of Islamic law. At the same time, their actions, particularly the widespread targeting of civilians, overshadowed any political messaging. Concentrated initially in districts such as Macomia, Mocímboa da Praia, and Palma, the violence gradually spread to other districts, further entrenching the conflict. ACLED data suggests that between 2017 and the end of 2018, the group had been involved in 66 incidents of political violence, of which 73% were targeting civilians.

Between 2020 and 2021, the conflict escalated dramatically, with the group capturing district headquarters, asserting control over Mocímboa da Praia for a year, and repeatedly threatening the LNG project at Palma. Their operations spread across northern Cabo Delgado, seizing key roads and targeting state institutions such as garrisons, police posts, and municipal buildings, while civilian attacks, though still deadly, declined proportionally.

16 Leigh Day. (2019, January 29). *Statement by Leigh Day in relation to the settlement of the human rights claims against Gemfields Ltd.*
17 Sanchez, A.S. (2024, December 30). Protests Shutter Mozambique's Balama Graphite Mine. Geopolitical Monitor.
18 AllAfrica. (2024, December 12). *Mozambique: Communities attack mines as local grievances are incorporated into protests and win concessions.*
19 Twigg Exploration & Mining Limitada. (2020, September 10). *Stakeholder engagement plan* (TWG-PL-SUS-0001_2).
20 Since pledging allegiance to the Islamic State in 2019, the group is referred to by some as Islamic State Mozambique (ISM). Locally, they are often simply called *Al-Shabaab* (The Youth) likely in reference to Al-Shabaab in Somalia, althought the groups maintain little mterial connection.

The March 2021 attacks on Palma town marked a decisive moment in the conflict, directly threatening Mozambique's LNG sector and prompting TotalEnergies to evacuate staff and declare force majeure. The assault underscored the insurgents' growing capacity and forced a rapid international response, with Rwandan forces deploying under a bilateral agreement in July 2021, soon followed by the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM). Within two months, the Rwandan Security Forces had retaken key district headquarters, while SAMIM established a slower presence across surrounding districts. However, limited coordination between the two interventions enabled insurgents to regroup and spread, and by late 2022, they had extended operations into 16 of Cabo Delgado's 17 districts as well as parts of Nampula and Niassa provinces, reflecting both their resilience and the enduring fragility of state control.

Since 2022, the insurgency has maintained resilience by dispersing into small mobile units, drawing limited tactical support from regional Islamic State (IS) networks and demonstrating new technical abilities such as deploying improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

2.4 RECENT CONFLICT TRENDS (2025)

In 2025, ASWJ has remained active and adaptive across Cabo Delgado, conducting frequent, low-intensity but widespread operations, maintaining influence over communities and mobility corridors while exploiting gaps in state control. The group continues to employ mobile, small-unit tactics that rely on rapid raids, ambushes, and hit-and-run attacks on security patrols, villages, and strategic transport routes. Their weaponry is mainly composed of captured or improvised arms, often replenished through battlefield seizures from FADM positions. While ASWJ has demonstrated capability in using Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) since around 2020, incidents remain relatively infrequent. They are far less central to their tactics than in other ISIS-linked theatres.

ASWJ engages with communities through a mix of coercion and strategic accommodation, alternating between intimidation, abductions, and targeted killings in some districts, and non-violent outreach – including preaching in mosques and distributing food aid – in others. This adaptive approach allows the group to maintain mobility corridors, secure local compliance, and exploit governance gaps while avoiding unnecessary confrontation where it seeks to build influence.

Since 2019, ASWJ has been formally recognised as Islamic State Mozambique (ISM), forming part of the Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP), and routinely features in Islamic State media outputs, including *al-Naba*. This connection provides propaganda amplification, symbolic legitimacy, and occasional strategic guidance, but there is little evidence of substantial financial flows, external fighters, or direct command-and-control from the Islamic State's core.

According to recent assessments, the group has shifted tactics towards frequent raids on key transport routes (notably the N14 corridor) and "toll-style" disruptions of civilian and commercial traffic – reflecting a resurgence rather than a decline.[21] In this respect, ASWJ's return to Mocímboa da Praia on 5 November, since losing control of the port town in August 2021 following Rwandan and SAMIM troop deployments, underscores the group's growing confidence.

A potential lifting of force majeure on the Afungi peninsula and the renewed presence of foreign companies in Palma, Pemba, and surrounding areas would reintroduce high-value civilian and commercial targets into the conflict environment. Given ASWJ's history of attacking foreign-linked infrastructure and personnel to generate leverage, visibility, and economic disruption, an expanded international footprint could prompt increased targeting of expatriate workers, logistics routes, and associated facilities.

2.5 IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

Conflict in Cabo Delgado has inflicted severe consequences on the civilian population, making ordinary citizens the primary victims of insecurity. Communities have endured targeted violence, displacement, loss of livelihoods, and systematic human rights abuses. These harms have deeply eroded community resilience and may carry long-term social repercussions that are still unfolding and remain largely unknown.

2.6 CIVILIAN TARGETING

Civilians have borne the brunt of the violence in Cabo Delgado, suffering at the hands of both insurgents and

21 Columbo, E. (2025, May 30). *The ties that bind: Including Cabo Delgado in political dialogue*. Centre for Strategic and International Studies

Figure 5: Al-Sunnah Wa Jama'ah (ASWJ) Armed Group[22]

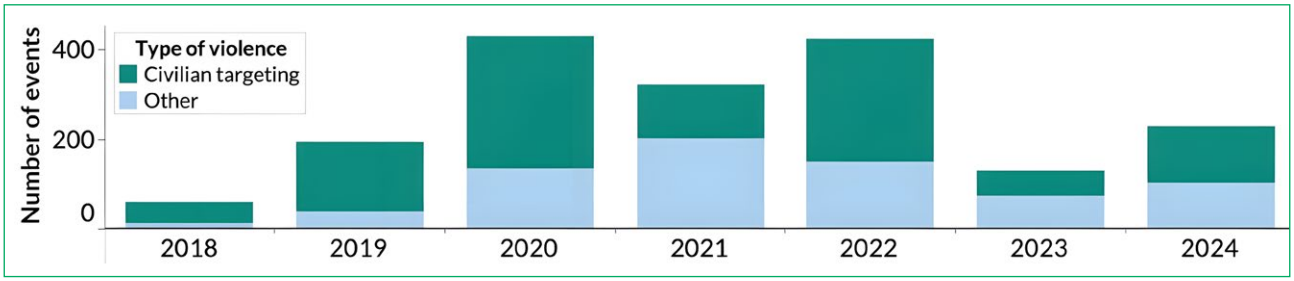
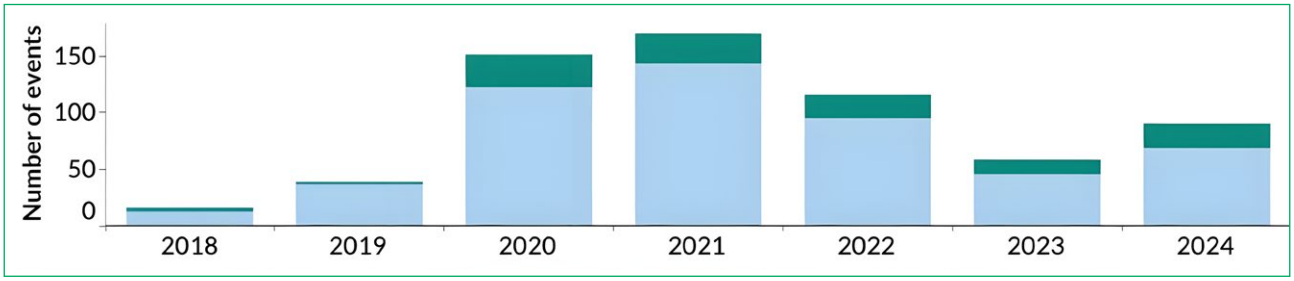


Figure 6: Defence and Security Forces, Mozambique[23]



government security forces. Since 2018, nearly 2,500 civilians have been killed in the conflict, accounting for over 40% of all fatalities. ASWJ has consistently targeted civilians through village attacks and killings in remote areas, while state forces have also been implicated in abuses. ACLED data show that the share of FADM violence targeting civilians has ranged from 8% to 21% annually since 2018, and PRM violence has reached up to 50% in some years (Figure 5). RSF and SAMIM forces have demonstrated significantly stronger records on civilian protection, with only a few isolated incidents of civilian harm reported during their deployments.

2.7 UNEVEN SECURITY PROVISION

Security provision in Cabo Delgado remains highly uneven, with protection efforts concentrated around strategic mining sites and major towns, while rural areas remain neglected. International and national forces have prioritised securing commercial sites and key urban centres, leaving communities in the hinterland exposed to insurgent attacks and banditry. In these areas, civilians are often forced to rely on the *Força Local*, who are usually poorly trained and lightly armed, and lack meaningful support from the state. This disparity not only heightens the vulnerability of rural populations but also fuels grievances over unequal security provision, undermining trust in government and potentially perpetuating cycles of violence.

2.8 DISPLACEMENT

After seven years of unrest in Cabo Delgado, displacement remains a protracted crisis. Despite repeated efforts, long-term strategies to enable safe returns, resettlement, or integration have seen limited progress, leaving hundreds of thousands in a state of prolonged uncertainty. Both local authorities and humanitarian actors face severe resource constraints, restricted access to affected areas, and volatile security conditions that hinder effective responses. Recurrent cyclones, as well as seasonal floods and heavy rains (November – April), have further complicated travel and logistics, with roads becoming impassable. During these periods, it is estimated that only 30 – 40 % of IDPs received delivery of essential supplies and services.[24] By mid 2024, approximately 580,000 people were displaced, predominantly women and children.[25] In 2025, fresh outbreaks of violence alone uprooted nearly 60,000 people within just two weeks, particularly in Chiúre, where over 42,000 were

22 Adapted from Bofin, P. (2025, April 23). *Rwanda in Mozambique: Limits to civilian protection*. Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).
23 Ibid.
24 ACAPS. (2024, April 17). *Mozambique: Conflict in Cabo Delgado* [Briefing note].
25 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. (2024). *7 years into the conflict: Solutions to displacement in Cabo Delgado remain elusive.*

displaced.[26] Conflict continues to drive the vast majority of displacement, with Cabo Delgado hosting around 70% of Mozambique's internally displaced population.[27]

2.9 ACCESS TO SERVICES AND LIVELIHOOD DISRUPTIONS

The conflict and repeated crises in Cabo Delgado have had highly negative economic impacts on local communities. Displacement and violence have disrupted livelihoods, while damage to infrastructure, including health centres, schools, and water systems, has undermined essential services and economic resilience.[28] The combination of insecurity, population displacement, and deteriorating public assets has led to rising poverty, food and water shortages, and diminishing opportunities for agriculture, trade, and daily income, leaving local economies weakened and households increasingly vulnerable.[29]

2.10 IMPACT ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

The conflict in Cabo Delgado has had severe gendered impacts, disproportionately affecting women and girls. Displacement and the collapse of schooling have led to a surge in child pregnancy rates, leaving many girls vulnerable to lifelong socio-economic challenges. In internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, women and girls have been subjected to rape and other forms of gender-based violence. Moreover, ASWJ has deliberately targeted women and girls, abducting them to serve as cooks or forced "wives." Those who manage to escape captivity face additional hardships, including difficulties reintegrating into their communities and enduring social stigma, further compounding their trauma and marginalisation.

2.11 IMPACT ON CHILDREN

Children in Cabo Delgado have faced some of the most devastating and long-lasting effects of the conflict. Between July 20 and 28, 2025, attacks by insurgents displaced over 46,000 people, nearly 60% of whom were children.[30] In IDP sites, children face heightened risks of malnutrition and disease, given that children's health needs are often overlooked, and access to even general health services is limited. The past year has also seen a marked increase in child abductions, with at least 120 children being abducted in the Mumu, Chibau, Ntotwe, and Magaia districts.[31] Insurgents often use these children for transporting looted goods, forced marriage, and, in some cases, as child soldiers. Children returning from abduction often require urgent medical attention, psychosocial support, and reintegration services, all of which would require resources that are currently insufficient. As seen in other contexts where the use of child soldiers is prevalent, the generational social impact can be profound. Over 100 schools have closed due to ongoing insecurity, which has interrupted the education of more than 50,000 children, jeopardizing literacy rates and heightening vulnerability to insurgent recruitment and exploitation.

3. SECURITY PROVIDERS

Limited state capacity has produced a crowded security landscape in Cabo Delgado. As violence escalated from 2018 to 2021, the PRM led counterinsurgency operations with support from the FADM. Weak coordination, poor interagency communication, and limited intelligence sharing soon exposed the limits of this arrangement. To plug the gaps, authorities turned to private military companies, the police contracted the Dyck Advisory Group (DAG)[32], and the military engaged the Wagner Group[33], while community self-defence groups (força local) also organically emerged. Continued failure to secure key areas, especially around onshore LNG sites, prompted a bilateral deployment of Rwanda Security Forces (RSF), followed by a Southern African Development Community (SADC) mission. However, geopolitical tensions between Rwanda and the SADC mission, particularly South Africa, undermined transparency and made collaboration around shared objectives difficult, if not impossible. Together, these actors achieved uneven results and created overlapping mandates, now hallmarks of Cabo Delgado's hybrid security order.

26 Al Jazeera. (2025). *UN says nearly 60,000 displaced by heavy fighting in northern Mozambique.*
27 International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2025). *Mozambique displacement report: Report no. 8.* Displacement Tracking Matrix.
28 ACAPS (2024). *Mozambique: Impact of Five Years of Conflict on Mozambique.* 2024.
29 International Organisation on Migration (IOM). *Roadmap for Northern Mozambique: Accelerating the Triple Nexus Programming 2022–2026.*
30 Associated Press, *Attacks by Islamic State-linked insurgents displace 46,000 people in Mozambique's north*, 28 July 2025
31 Human Rights Watch, *Mozambique: Armed Groups' Child Abductions Surge in North*, 24 June 2025.
32 DAG is a private military company based in South Africa, founded in 2012 by Lionel Dyck.
33 The Wagner Group is a Russian state-funded paramilitary organization/private military company led by Yevgeny Prigozhin (until 2023) and now Pavel Prigozhin.

3.1 MOZAMBICAN REPUBLICAN POLICE (PRM)

The Mozambican National Police's (Polícia da República de Moçambique, PRM) establishment is rooted in the General Peace Agreement (GPA) and post-war reforms of the early 1990s. Falling under the Ministry of Interior, the PRM is the primary law enforcement actor in the country, responsible for safeguarding the security of persons and property and maintaining public order. The PRM's mandate, legal basis, and core functions are defined in the national law (notably law 19/1992), the updated Police Law (16/2023) and by the Constitution's provision on policing.[34]

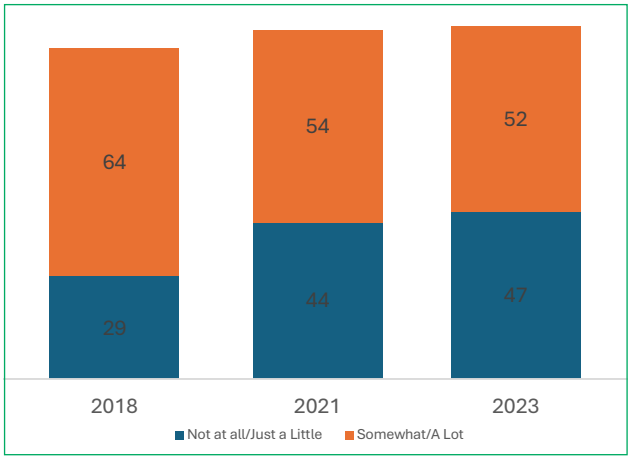
The PRM operates from the General Command to provincial, district, and station commands. District commands and stations are led by commissioned officers appointed by the General Commander, with standard operational sections (operations, intelligence, and administration). In Cabo Delgado, the provincial command oversees district and station units, supplemented at times by specialised formations. Key PRM formations relevant to Cabo Delgado include the Rapid Intervention Unit (*Unidade de Intervenção Rápida*, UIR) – a rapid-response unit deployed for high-risk operations, with additional public-order, traffic, and border policing components. The UIR was among the first forces sent to confront the insurgency after October 2017, alongside the military (FADM).[35]

In Cabo Delgado, the PRM has operated alongside FADM, foreign contingents (notably Rwandan security forces), SAMIM, and PMCs. It was the Ministry of Interior that initially contracted the private security company DAG in 2019 to provide aerial support to PRM-operations.

Significant legislative and institutional reforms have been made to transform the police from its colonial history as a paramilitary force into an accountable public service.[36] However, the literature generally reflects a failure of these reforms to significantly alter or modernise policing strategy, management, and procedures in line with a democratic dispensation.[37] Despite formal mandates under Decree 84/2014 and oversight by the national Ombudsman's office, the PRM operates within a weak accountability environment. Though disciplinary provisions exist for misconduct, civilian oversight remains largely ineffective. Public prosecutors, although they are empowered to pursue law enforcement violations, are constrained by limited resources and political interference.[38]

Credible reporting over multiple years highlights systemic concerns within the PRM, including corruption and extortion, misuse of force, weak internal accountability, lack of training and professionalism, and a lack of transparency. In Cabo Delgado, human rights organisations have reported on forced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and excessive force by PRM units, particularly by the UIR. These alleged abuses often target suspected insurgents or civilians arbitrarily detained

Figure 7: Trust in the Police (%) | 2018 - 2023[40]



Respondents were asked: How much do you trust the police, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? (% who say 'Not at all/Just a little' vs 'Somewhat/A /lot').

34 Assembleia da República [Moçambique]. (1992, 31 de dezembro). Lei n.º 19/92: Cria a Polícia da República de Moçambique [Law No. 19/92 creating the Police of the Republic of Mozambique]. *Boletim da República*, I Série, n.º 53 (3.º Suplemento) ; Assembleia da República [Moçambique]. (2013, 12 de agosto). Lei n.º 16/2013: Lei da Polícia da República de Moçambique. *Boletim da República*, I Série, n.º 64 (7.º Suplemento).

35 ACLED. (2024, March 6). *Actor profile | Police of the Republic of Mozambique (PRM)*. Cabo Ligado — Mozambique Conflict Monitor. Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project.

36 The Police Donor Group was established in 1996 under the coordination of the UNDP as part of a major security sector reform. Between 1997 and 2007, it implemented a three-phase, US$33.7 million Police Reform program. Key initiatives included establishing the Police Academy (ACIPOL), training and retraining officers, rehabilitating infrastructure, procuring equipment, revising regulations and strategies, and promoting police professionalisation and modernised management.

37 Lorizzo, T., & Petrovic, V. (2022). *Democratic policing in Mozambique: Challenges of training for professionalization* [Manuscript]. Dullah Omar Institute, University of the Western Cape & REFORMAR – Research for Mozambique

38 Club of Mozambique. (2021, July 19). *Mozambique police reform: Criminal Investigation Service shifted to Attorney General's Office.*

during protests. Though a small number of officers have been convicted for excessive force, including a high-profile 2024 conviction for shooting protesters, most cases go uninvestigated or end in symbolic disciplinary actions.[39]

While targeted training for the PRM by the UNDP and other international partners on human rights, community engagement, and professionalisation has been ongoing since the onset of conflict in Cabo Delgado, frontline compliance remains inconsistent, and enforcement of newly learned standards has been uneven. As such, Afrobarometer public opinion data indicates a continued and precipitous drop in citizen trust of the PRM. Between 2018 and 2023, the number of citizens who said they trust the police 'Somewhat or A lot' dropped by over ten points, while the number of citizens who said they trust the police 'Not at all or Just a Little' rose by 18% (Figure 7). Given the critical role the PRM plays in Cabo Delgado's counterinsurgency efforts, the erosion of citizen trust and strained community relations is a particularly concerning trend, as effective counterterrorism strategies rely heavily on local cooperation, intelligence-sharing, and legitimacy at the community level.

3.2 MOZAMBICAN DEFENCE ARMED FORCES (FADM)

The Mozambique Defence Armed Forces (FADM) also have their roots in the 1992 GPA, which ended the civil war between the ruling Frelimo and Renamo. Central to the GPA was the demobilisation of Frelimo and Renamo forces and the establishment of a unified military. Today, the FADM falls under the authority of the Ministry of National Defence and is tasked with safeguarding Mozambique's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as supporting internal security when called upon. The FADM's mandate is enshrined in the Constitution, as well as key legislation such as the National Defence and the Armed Forces Law (Law No. 18/97), Military Service Law (Law No. 32/2009), and Military Mobilisation and Requisition Law (Law No. 5/2017).

The FADM consists of three main service branches: the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Cabo Delgado operations have been dominated by the Army, with infantry brigades supported intermittently by naval patrols along the coast and limited air mobility assets. Provincial deployments fall under central command in Maputo but are often reinforced by ad hoc rapid-response battalions in insurgency-affected districts. Key components relevant to Cabo Delgado include the Special Forces and the Marines. These units have been deployed for counterinsurgency, protection of strategic sites (notably LNG infrastructure on the Afungi Peninsula), and joint operations with foreign contingents such as the RDF and SAMIM.

FADM is heavily dependent on foreign aid and remains one of the smallest and poorest-equipped militaries in the SADC region, often relying on outdated Soviet-era equipment. Poor logistics and mobility, low salaries, and limited training in counterinsurgency and civilian protection add to the FADM's capacity challenges. While exact figures are difficult to find, the Mozambican armed forces are estimated to comprise approximately 11,200 active personnel.[41] According to conventional counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine, an effective counterinsurgency campaign requires a ratio of one counterinsurgent per 50 civilians, a benchmark that Mozambique falls well short of, given Cabo Delgado's population of 2.3 million, even before accounting for broader national defence obligations.[42] This mismatch has limited FADM's capacity to establish a sustained security presence across the affected districts. In many areas, government forces have focused on strategic corridors, provincial capitals, and areas near extractive infrastructure, leaving more remote villages without protection or early warning mechanisms.

Compounding these structural constraints are challenges related to troop deployment and morale. Many FADM personnel stationed in the north are recruited from other regions of the country, and Cabo Delgado is widely regarded as an undesirable posting. There have been credible reports of defections, refusal to engage, and inconsistent rules of engagement among deployed units. In interviews with humanitarian actors and local leaders,

39 Amnesty International. (2020, September 9). *Mozambique: Security forces implicated in serious abuses in Cabo Delgado* ; Human Rights Watch. (2025). *World Report 2025: Mozambique* ; International Crisis Group. (2021). *Stemming the insurrection in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado*. Crisis Group Africa Report No. 303.

40 Afrobarometer. (2018–2023). *Trust in the police in Mozambique* [Data set]. Afrobarometer Data, Rounds 7-9. https://www.afrobarometer.org/data/

41 NationMaster. (n.d.). *Mozambique: Military*. In *NationMaster country profiles*. Retrieved August 21, 2025, from https://www.nationmaster.com/country-info/profiles/Mozambique/Military

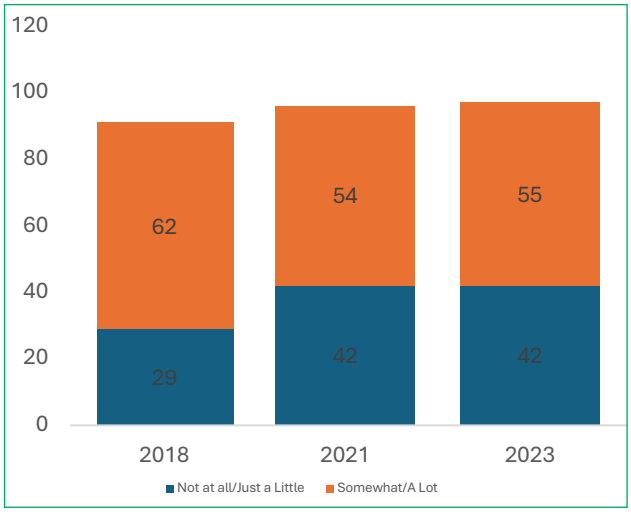
42 U.S. Army, & U.S. Marine Corps. (2007). *Counterinsurgency field manual* (FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5). University of Chicago Press.

concerns have also been raised about the conduct and professionalism of FADM contingents. It has been reported that security forces have demanded payment for safe passage and boat rides to neighbouring regions.

While Mozambique is formally a party to a range of international human rights and humanitarian law instruments (See Annex A and Annex B), these frameworks have not translated into consistent accountability for security forces in the field. The FADM has been implicated in serious human-rights abuses in Cabo Delgado, including arbitrary detentions, extrajudicial killings, and mistreatment of civilians suspected of links to insurgents. Reports from Amnesty International and media outlets have documented soldiers committing abuses, often recorded in videos that circulated publicly.[43] The use of military uniforms by insurgents has sometimes complicated efforts to verify these allegations. Still, multiple international human rights organisations have corroborated abuses through satellite imagery, video evidence, and eyewitness testimony.[44] While the government has promised investigations, systemic accountability remains weak, damaging the force's legitimacy.

This conduct has likely been a contributing factor in Cabo Delgado's fragile civil-military relations, where public confidence is low. At a national level, citizen trust in the military, as with the police, has dropped since the emergence of conflict, according to Afrobarometer public opinion data. While 29% of civilians reported trusting the military 'Not at all or Just a Little' in 2018, 42% felt the same when asked in 2023 (Figure 8). Interviews with citizens in Cabo Delgado indicate trust levels may be considerably lower than the national average. Without meaningful reform and improved oversight mechanisms, FADM is likely to continue to struggle to meet the demands of sustained counterinsurgency operations in Cabo Delgado.

Figure 8: Trust in the Military (%) | 2018-2023[45]



Respondents were asked: How much do you trust the military, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? (% who say 'Not at all/Just a little' vs 'Somewhat/A lot").

3.3 FORÇA LOCALE

The *Força Local* (FL) refers to loosely organised, community-based self-defence groups that emerged organically in Cabo Delgado as the insurgency intensified after 2017. Initially unarmed vigilante groups, they have been gradually incorporated, to varying degrees, into the state's counterinsurgency architecture with the tacit or explicit approval of local authorities and the Mozambican government.[46] Their role has been most pronounced in rural districts where state security forces had limited presence. Minister of National Défense Minister Cristovao Chume has publicly acknowledged deficiencies in the state security presence's ability to defend communities as the reason for the emergence of FL, describing how 'we as the defence forces are not able to be there to defend them all the time.'[47]

Recruitment is typically coordinated at the district level, often in consultation with traditional authorities. However, there are no publicly available guidelines detailing the selection criteria, vetting processes, or training standards for these units.[48] Interviews suggest that most LF have

43 Amnesty International. (2021, March 2). *Mozambique: Civilians killed as war crimes committed by armed group, government forces, and private military contractors – new report*. Amnesty International.
44 Human Rights Watch. (2021). *Mozambique: Civilians prevented from fleeing fighting* [News release]. Human Rights Watch.
45 Afrobarometer. (2018–2023). Trust in the military in Mozambique [Data set]. Afrobarometer Data, Rounds 7-9. https://www.afrobarometer.org/data/
46
47 Chatham House. Interview with H.E Cristovao Artur Chume, defense minister of Mozambique. YouTube Video. 26:22 minutes. April 6, 2022
48 Research indicates that LF groupings operating in areas considered supportive of Frelimo have been provided with arms, while those in regions not aligned with Frelimo, such as coastal communities, Balama, and Namuno, have not received such support and instead rely predominantly on traditional weapons. The government has worked to maintain the loyalty of LF groups by, wherever possible, emphasizing their historical role in the liberation war and regularly celebrating their achievements. See: (Bofin, 2023).

some degree of loyalty to Frelimo, with recruitment typically favouring individuals with ties to the party. It predominantly includes liberation war veterans, former soldiers demobilised after the civil war, and ordinary citizens motivated to resist the violent insurgency.[49] One exception to this has been the Naparama militia, which emerged in Balama and Namuno in 2022 following an increase in insurgent activity in those districts. The group's cultural origins can be traced back to the Naparama militia, which emerged during the 1980s in Zambezia and Nampula provinces, supporting Frelimo while maintaining its independence from the party.[50] While the government initially provided tacit endorsement for the Naparamas in Balama to fulfil community defensc functions, over the last two years, the relationship has changed, and government forces have increasingly engaged in direct confrontations with them.

The legal framework governing LF units remains poorly defined. In April 2023, a law was passed to officially legalise and formalise the LF to 'strengthen the role of the defence and security forces in countering and containing the spread of militant Islamist incursions, protecting community settlements and public and private infrastructure'.[51] While units now nominally fall under the Ministry of Defence, there is no dedicated parliamentary committee or civilian body tasked with monitoring their operations. Unlike police or formal military forces, members of LF operate in a legal grey zone, often wielding lethal force without the protections or obligations of regular soldiers. In the absence of strong institutional safeguards, LF risks becoming a destabilising force in the long term. The outsourcing of protection to civilian militias risks normalising militarised governance at the community level and creating an unsustainable 'negative peace',[52] where there may be intermittent periods of reduced violence but a continued absence of the attitudes, institutions, and structure that create and sustain peaceful societies.

The successes of the LF have received praise from the state. This has included high-profile gestures such as President Nyusi's visit to Cabo Delgado to present service medals to 235 LF members.[53] The Minister of Defence has also acknowledged their inherent local knowledge and language skills as assets in intelligence gathering and civilian protection, particularly in districts such as Macomia and Mueda.[54] Força Locale units have played a critical role in intercepting insurgent movements and warning communities of impending attacks. However, despite their value as a supplementary force, FL units face significant operational constraints. Many are under-resourced, receiving little more than basic firearms and subsistence allowances from the Mozambican government. They receive minimal formal training in military conduct, human rights, or rules of engagement, which raises serious concerns over potential abuses. In some districts, community members have expressed relief at having individuals familiar to them involved in protection efforts. In others, however, the arming of civilians has revived old grievances or inter-community tensions, particularly in areas where historical disputes over land, ethnicity, or political affiliation persist.

3.4 RWANDAN SECURITY FORCES (RSF)

Rwandan security forces first deployed to Cabo Delgado in July 2021, following major attacks on the town of Palma that led to the suspension of the nearby LNG project. The deployment in Mozambique operates under a bilateral agreement between Mozambique and Rwanda and is supported by international partners (notably the European Union). The terms of the agreement have never been made public and have not been submitted to Mozambique's Parliament for debate or ratification, raising concerns among opposition and civil society organisations about transparency, accountability, and the implications for national sovereignty.[55]

The deployment is comprised of a joint task force of the Rwandan Defence Force (RDF) and Rwanda National Police

49 Bofin, P. (2023). Actor Profile: Local Forces. Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).
50 Gould, T. (2023). 'Who Are the Naparama?' Zitamar, February 20, 2023.
51 Voice of America (2023).'Mozambique Legalizes Local Militias to Help Fight Northern Insurgents.' VOA News, April 6, 2023.
52 See the Institute for Economics and Peace definition of Positive and Negative Peace: https://www.visionofhumanity.org/defining-the-concept-of-peace/
53 Bofin (2023).
54 Chatham House (2025).
55 Nhamirre, B. (2024). *Are Rwandan troops becoming Cabo Delgado's main security provider?* ISS Today. Institute for Security Studies.

(RNP) troops. The initial deployment consisted of roughly 1 000 personnel to the Mocimboa da Praia and Palma districts. Early successes in dislodging militants from these districts and regaining control of additional towns and roads enabled the RSF to expand its area of operations and establish additional outposts along the N380, in the southern Mocimboa da Praia, Nangade, and Ancuabe districts. By May 2024, the number of Rwandan forces in Cabo Delgado stood at approximately 4,000.

RDF units are widely regarded as the best-trained, best-equipped, and most experienced force in Cabo Delgado, particularly when compared to local Mozambican forces and earlier SADC deployments. This relative advantage is reinforced by logistical and material support from EU funding (around €20 million) and other international assistance. Moreover, Rwanda's security forces have considerable experience in confronting irregular armed groups in complex terrain through deployments in the DRC, Central African Republic (CAR), and troop contributions to UN peacekeeping operations.

At the outset of their deployment, Rwandan forces relied heavily on direct combat operations, using forceful tactics to retake strategic areas and disrupt the insurgents' ability to organise and manoeuvre. Once these objectives were achieved, their emphasis shifted toward strengthening ties with local communities within their zones of control. This has included regular patrols, both on foot and using lightly armoured vehicles, to ensure visibility and presence. Their approach to winning community confidence has also involved supporting public works initiatives and opening their medical facilities to civilians. By forging close relationships that often sidestep state institutions, the Rwandan forces have been able to gather more reliable local intelligence. A telling sign of this trust is that many civilians reportedly seek intervention from Rwandan troops when they experience abuse at the hands of Mozambican security services.[56]

Public sources and major human rights investigations have not documented abuses by RSF in Cabo Delgado. RSF operations have been credited with delivering rapid security improvements, and their personnel have been celebrated for their professionalism and prioritisation of civilian protection. These perceptions are borne out by ACLED data – the proportion of FADM violence in Cabo Delgado where civilians have been intentionally targeted, ranges from 8% to 21% annually since 2018.[57] In contrast, there have been just two recorded incidents of civilian targeting by Rwandan forces. Interviews with a broad cross-section of stakeholders in Cabo Delgado indicate a general high level of trust in the Rwandan forces. However, the opaque nature of the bilateral agreement, including the terms and duration of Rwanda's deployment, continues to raise questions about sovereignty, command control, and transition planning.[58]

3.5 PRIVATE SECURITY COMPANIES (PSCS)

Private security companies (PSCs) have become indispensable to the mining sector in Mozambique, particularly in high-risk regions such as Cabo Delgado, where an influx of foreign investment following the discovery of vast reserves of natural gas, rubies, and graphite has accelerated demand for professionalised PSCs. They provide essential services, including site protection, convoy security, and risk management, enabling mining operations to continue in areas where state security capacity is insufficient. These companies also generate significant employment opportunities and are the largest employers outside of the public sector, training and hiring large numbers of guards and support staff, which can contribute positively to local economies. However, the fragile and conflict-affected environment in Cabo Delgado underscores the critical need for strong governance and oversight. Unchecked abuses by PSCs, such as excessive use of force, harassment, or complicity in human rights violations, can expose mining companies to severe legal liabilities and reputational damage. Such misconduct erodes trust with local communities, undermines the social license to operate, and can exacerbate social tensions, fueling grievances that drive further insecurity in the province. While the use of PSC's might satisfy shareholder intersts today, the long-term security of mining company

56 Bofin, P. (2025, April 23). *Rwanda in Mozambique: Limits to civilian protection* [ACLED report]. ACLED.
57 Ibid.
58 Nhamirre (2024).

assets will be jeapodized if these PSCs contribute to generating social greivences and resultant instability. Therefore, the proper regulation of private security is essential for security, socio-economic development, and respect for human rights.

3.5.1 Overview of the Sector

The private security industry in Mozambique emerged in the early 1990s, during the country's transition from civil war to peace and liberalisation of its economy, with decree No.26/90 of 29 November 1990 creating the legal foundation for private sector companies to operate. The withdrawal of foreign troops and restructuring of state security forces during this period left significant gaps in the provision of security for individuals, businesses, and foreign investors, fueled further by a rise in urban crime. This vacuum created the rise of domestic guarding firms, initially focused on basic site protection in major cities. Over time, the industry has grown rapidly alongside foreign investment in extractive industries, banking, and infrastructure, with major international companies entering the market to cover guarding, access control, cash-in-transit, convoying, control-room services, and security-risk management, among other services. Authoritative public data on the sector is limited. However, fieldwork interviews suggest there are approximately 150 licensed firms nationwide, although many of these are not currently operating. According to the Ministry of the Interior (MoI), approximately 31 PSCs are operating in Cabo Delgado.[59] The market is a mix of large multinationals (such as G4S and Gardaworld), and domestic providers.

3.5.2 Domestic Regulatory Framework

Mozambique's private security sector is regulated under Decree No.9/2007 in which 'private security company' is defined as a 'legal entity whose corporate purpose is to provide private security and protection services.'[60] The Decree's 45 articles provide stipulations around types of services permitted, management, licensing, inspections, registration, permitted equipment, in addition to supervision and inspections. The types of services permitted under the decree include:

a) Protection of people and property through guards;
b) Security of economic, social, and cultural facilities through garrisons, guards, patrols, and an electronic security system;
c) Preparation of security studies;
d) Installation and maintenance of security materials and equipment.[61]

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) is responsible for licensing PSCs, with the authority to limit the number of firms operating in the country, taking into account economic and social development, crime rates, and police operational capacity in each province.[62] Sole proprietorships of a PSC must be exclusively owned by a Mozambican national, whereas in the case of commercial companies, foreign partners may participate provided that Mozambican citizens hold the majority of the share capital.[63]

The Decree outlines stipulations for guards: they must be Mozambican nationals, over 21 years of age, hold a clean criminal record, completed military service, and have completed successful MoI-recognised security guard training courses.[64] It also outlines obligations to cooperate with law enforcement authorities to maintain public order, security, and tranquility beyond the specific posts to which they are assigned; maintain constant contact with the PRM; and immediately notify law enforcement authorities of any public crime of which they become aware in the exercise of their duties and detain any individual caught in the act and deliver them to the nearest police station.[65]

The regulation provides stipulations on equipment and materials, uniforms, and identification cards. Guards are permitted to carry defensive weapons when performing their operations. However, the carrying of firearms requires specific licenses issued by the PRM, and guards are permitted to carry low-calibre pistols and single-barreled semi-automatic shotguns.[66]

59 Centre for Democracy & Development Mozambique. (2025, March 15). *Challenges, human rights, and governance in the context of Cabo Delgado.*
60 Government of Mozambique. (2007, April 30). *Decree No. 9/2007: Regulation of Private Security Companies.* Boletim da República, I Série, No. 17. Maputo: Imprensa Nacional de Moçambique.
61 Article 4
62 Article 43
63 Article 6
64 Article 17
65 Article 20
66 Article 26

The supervision and inspection of private security activities is carried out by the police, with PSCs required to make their books available for inspection, as well as any related documents, to police inspectors when requested. The Decree stipulates that the MoI will appoint a delegate for each PSC, assigned to coordinate between the PRM and the company, oversee the company's operations in accordance with the law, and submit a semi-annual activity report to the MoI.[67] The Decree outlines a set of fines and penalties that can be levied on PSCs for infractions, including the suspension or seizure of companies' licenses to operate.[68]

3.5.3 International Best Practice

At the international level, growing calls to define applicable legal standards and embed best practices have driven the development of several key initiatives. Two of the most significant are the Montreux Document on Private Military and Security Companies,[69] which outlines states' obligations under international law, and the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Providers (ICoCA),[70] which establishes principles of responsible conduct for private actors. Complementing these efforts, human rights considerations are central to the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPs) [71] – a multi-stakeholder framework led by the extractive industries. Within the UN, a draft Convention on Private Military and Security Companies has been developed, and debate around business and human rights have been captured in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGP).[72] In addition, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 18788 (Management System for Private Security Operations) provides a risk management system anchored in principles of accountability to law and respect for human rights.[73]

3.5.4 Governance Risks

The following section presents governance risks within Mozambique's private security sector, identified through interviews with industry stakeholders, civil society actors, and supporting desk-based research.

Uneven governance standards across the private security sector. Interviews with representatives from larger international PSCs indicate a high degree of adherence to international best practice, including ICoCA, VPHSR, and the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) 18788. Greater financial and institutional capacity enables the establishment of more robust governance mechanisms, while pressure from international clients and investors, along with reputational risks, further compels them to maintain high operational and ethical standards. By contrast, smaller domestic firms may lack a similar set of incentives to invest in robust governance mechanisms, leading to heightened governance risks within this segment of the industry. Moreover, client requirements often shape these arrangements in ways that prioritise cost minimisation over substantive security. Because security spending is widely viewed as a grudge payment that erodes profit margins and return on investment, companies frequently aim to meet only the most basic compliance thresholds – investing just enough to create the appearance of security rather than ensuring meaningful risk mitigation.

Capacity challenges in enforcing regulatory oversight. Decree No. 9/2007 requires that offices, equipment, and personnel be inspected prior to the commencement of operations. It also mandates the appointment of a PRM official to oversee the company's activities in accordance with the law and to submit a semi-annual activity report to the Ministry of the Interior. However, limited capacity and resources hinder the ability to conduct regular inspections and ensure compliance. This challenge is particularly

67 Article 45
68 Article 31
69 International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), & Government of Switzerland. (2008). *The Montreux Document: On pertinent international legal obligations and good practices for States related to operations of private military and security companies during armed conflict*.
70 International Code of Conduct Association (ICoCA). (2021). *International code of conduct for private security service providers (amended 2021)*. International Code of Conduct Association.
71 Voluntary Principles Initiative. (2000). *The Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights*. Voluntary Principles Initiative.
72 United Nations. (2013). *Final report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo* (S/2013/433).
73 International Organization for Standardization. (2015). *ISO 18788:2015 — Management system for private security operations — Requirements with guidance for use*.

acute in Cabo Delgado, where vast distances, insecurity, and difficult access severely constrain the PRM's ability to perform inspection and oversight functions. This physical and administrative distance, combined with chronic capacity constraints, also creates fertile ground for corruption. In some cases, clients can expedite or secure approvals through informal payments, turning oversight into a transactional process rather than a genuine mechanism of accountability.[74]

Non-compliance and labour violations. Public reporting has highlighted systemic labour issues within smaller domestic private security firms, including unpaid social security contributions, below-minimum-wage salaries, excessive working hours, and other unsafe practises.[75] With public institutions often being a primary debtor for the sector, and given the state's ongoing fiscal challenges, late or non-payment of invoices has seen wage arrears and sudden redundancies.[76] The poor treatment of guards undermines security by lowering morale, increasing turnover, and making personnel more vulnerable to bribery and insider threats. It also exposes companies to legal, reputational, and operational risks while heightening the potential for labour unrest.

Lack of publicly available data. The lack of publicly available data on Mozambique's private security sector makes it difficult to ensure effective oversight and accountability. Without transparency regarding company compliance, licensing, workforce conditions, and incidents, regulators, clients, and civil society cannot accurately assess risks or enforce standards. It is difficult to determine the extent to which official fines or other penalties have been levied by the state in pursuit of regulatory compliance. A notable public case which is still under investigation is Gigante Panda Segurança, a Chinese-owned PSC based in Beira, which, in 2023, was accused of money laundering, financing of terrorism, tax evasion, and forgery.[77]

Human rights violation risks. PSCs operating in Cabo Delgado may formally request police support, such as armed escorts, through the Provincial PRM Command. While this framework facilitates operational support in high-risk environments, it also exposes companies to liability risks linked to the PRM's limited training and poor human rights record. Documented cases, including reports by Amnesty International (2021) and the UN Human Rights Council (2022), have highlighted incidents where Mozambican security forces in Cabo Delgado were implicated in extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, and abuses against civilians. Engaging PRM units without due diligence and monitoring mechanisms can therefore create legal, reputational, and operational risks.

Limited access to justice and recourse. Access to justice in Cabo Delgado remains highly limited, with weak judicial infrastructure, a shortage of legal professionals, and ongoing insecurity restricting the ability of citizens to seek redress. In this context, human rights violations committed by PSCs may go unreported or uninvestigated, eroding accountability and undermining a critical regulatory mechanism that should deter misconduct.

74 CDD Mozambique. (2025, March 15). *Challenges, human rights, and governance in the context of Cabo Delgado*. Centre for Democracy & Development Mozambique.
75 Club of Mozambique. (2025, June 30). *Mozambique: Private security companies owe 123 million meticais to INSS*.
76 Club of Mozambique. (2016, October 10). *Mozambican private security companies in crisis*. Club of Mozambique.
77 Business & Human Rights Resources Centre (2023). *Mozambique: Chinese private security company accused of money laundering, financing of terrorism, tax evasion and forgery of documents, among other crimes*

Figure 9: Table of Potential Hybrid Security Governance Risks

RISK CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL IMPACT
Collaboration with State Security Forces	PSCs often operate alongside state security forces that lack adequate human rights training.	Increased risk of joint human rights abuses and excessive use of force.
	Risk of PSCs and mining companies being implicated in state-led abuses or political repression.	Reputational damage, legal liability, and loss of community trust.
Human Rights Violations	Use of excessive or unlawful force due to inadequate training: PSC personnel may lack adequate training in the legal and proportional use of force, increasing the risk of abuses during operations.	Civilian harm; loss of trust in security provision.
	Gender-based violence and harassment: PSC staff, often overwhelmingly male, have been associated with incidents of harassment and violence against female community members.	Increased community grievances; reputational damage to companies.
	Lack of accountability mechanisms: Weak oversight structures mean misconduct often goes unpunished, undermining trust in security provision.	Impunity for abuses, undermining human rights protections.
Undermining Public Security	**Confusion over roles and responsibilities:** PSC uniforms and operations may be indistinguishable from those of state security forces, leading to public misunderstanding of their authority.	Public uncertainty over authority; erosion of confidence in state forces
	Erosion of trust in public security institutions: Reliance on PSCs can deepen perceptions of state weakness and diminish confidence in state capacity to provide security.	Weakening legitimacy of public security institutions.
	Limited democratic oversight: Parliaments, regulators, media, and civil society can fail to provide consistent oversight, enabling abuses and malpractice.	Lack of accountability; space for abuse and corruption.
Socio-Economic and Developmental Risks	**Over-securitization of communities:** Heavy PSC presence can destabilize social relations and create an environment of intimidation and mistrust in authority.	Intimidation of civilians; destabilization of social relations.
	Low professional standards among local firms: Many local PSCs lack adequate training and capacity, creating operational and reputational risks.	Operational inefficiency; increased risk of misconduct.
Conflict Dynamics and Security Risks	**Exacerbation of tensions:** Poorly trained PSCs may mishandle protests, community grievances, or conflict situations, escalating rather than calming tensions.	Escalation of tensions and violence.
	Dependence on PSCs in conflict settings: Overstretched or ineffective public forces can lead to overreliance on PSCs, entrenching private actors in core security functions without adequate regulation.	Entrenchment of private actors in core security roles without oversight.
	Potential misuse by extractive industries: Large-scale hiring of PSCs by resource companies can link security provision to private corporate interests rather than community well-being, exacerbating presource-curse dynamics.[78]	Heightened community-company conflicts; increased hostility toward investments.
Regulatory and Institutional Frameworks	**Inadequate laws and enforcement:** Existing national regulations often focus on licensing rather than robust monitoring and control.	Failure to detect and prevent abuses.
	Under-resourced regulators: Regulatory agencies lack the capacity to enforce standards or respond to violations.	Inability to enforce standards; continued sector impunity.
	Neglect of broader governance implications: Policymakers give insufficient attention to the strategic risks posed by the privatization of security in fragile contexts.	Long-term risks to state authority and democratic control over security.

78 Where the 'resource curse' literature suggests large inflows of mining sector revenues can cause adverse political and economic effects, the idea of the 'presource curse' suggests similar adverse effects can result from the anticipation of future resource revenues. See: Frynas, J.G., Buur, L. (2020). The presource curse in Africa: Economic and political effects of anticipating natural resource revenues. *The Extractives Industries and Society*. Vol 7, No. 4

4. OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRENGTHENING SECURITY GOVERNANCE IN MOZAMBIQUE

4.1 THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

- **Develop comprehensive internal compliance frameworks** and codes of conduct aligned with international standards – including the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Providers (ICoCA), the Montreux Document on Pertinent International Legal Obligations and Good Practices for States Related to operations of Private Military and Security Companies During Armed Conflict, and the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR). These frameworks should clearly define acceptable conduct, escalation procedures, and accountability measures across all operational levels.
- **Support (and advocate for) the establishment of an independent oversight mechanism** – ideally an industry regulatory body – mandated to monitor compliance, certify companies, conduct inspections, and administer sanctions. Such a body would improve consistency across operators and reduce opportunities for regulatory evasion.
- **Partner with accredited training institutions** to ensure that personnel meet recognised industry standards, such as ISO 18788, and receive mandatory instruction on human rights, gender sensitivity, conflict de-escalation, and appropriate use of force. This helps professionalise the sector and reduces risks associated with poorly trained staff.
- **Create an independent grievance and complaints mechanism** (as per ISO 1888), accessible to employees and communities, and implement regular internal audits, transparent reporting on misconduct, labour conditions, and human rights performance.
- **Encourage collaborative industry platforms** where PSCs and mining companies share lessons learned, coordinate approaches, and jointly develop governance standards. Rather than relying on ad hoc arrangements, these forums can cultivate consistent, practical solutions that reflect the realities of operating in complex environments.
- **Commit to responsible mining and security governance initiatives**, such as the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA), and where appropriate, join the International Council for Mining and Metals (ICMM). Membership signals adherence to international norms, reduces reputational and legal exposure, and helps strengthen the company's social licence to operate in fragile settings.

4.2 THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

- **Adopt a people-centred approach to security in Cabo Delgado,** prioritising citizen protection as a public good. This includes implementing a civilian-harm mitigation policy across PRM/FADM and all partnered forces, with routine after-action reviews, public reporting, and clear tracking of civilian-protection outcomes.
- **Establish an independent oversight mechanism**, ideally a dedicated industry regulatory authority, empowered to monitor compliance, empowered to certify private security companies, conduct routine and ad hoc inspections, and apply sanctions where necessary. Creating such a body would strengthen state oversight, promote consistent standards across operators, and minimise opportunities for regulatory evasion or informal arrangements.
- **Establish a formal, multi-stakeholder oversight forum** involving local authorities, civil society, and private security providers. This should include a Civilian Harm & Grievance Registry that accepts both state and PSC complaints, with anonymised dashboards to enhance transparency and improve public accountability.
- **Review and update Decree 9/2007** to reflect changes in the private security industry, the current operating environment, and the rise of new security technologies such as drones and digital surveillance systems. Modernised regulation would better equip authorities to manage risks and ensure professional standards.
- **Embed international best practices directly into state and private-sector contracts,** including ICoCA, VPSHR, ISO 18788 requirements, independent grievance mechanisms, and third-party monitoring. Government should also encourage PSC membership in the Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI) to raise sector-wide standards, following examples set by TotalEnergies and Gemfields.
- **Accelerate development of a National Action Plan** to integrate the VPSHR into legislation, licensing systems, procurement processes, and oversight structures. This would operationalise Mozambique's commitments as an engaged government member of the VPI and strengthen coherence across public and private security provision.

Annex A

Regional, continental and international security instruments: Mozambique's status

CATEGORY	TREATY/INSTRUMENT
United Nations Human Rights Treaties[79]	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Acceded 21 July 1993. Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR (abolition of the death penalty). Convention against Torture (CAT). Acceded 14 September 1999 Optional Protocol to CAT (OPCAT) Acceded 1 July 2014. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Acceded 21 April 1997. Optional Protocol to CEDAW. Acceded 4 November 2008. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). Acceded 18 April 1983. International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW) Acceded 19 August 2013. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Acceded 26 April 1994. Optional Protocol to the CRC on involvement in armed conflict. Acceded 19 October 2004. Optional Protocol to the CRC on sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Acceded 6 March 2003. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Acceded 30 January 2012.
African Regional Instruments[80]	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul Charter). Ratified 22 February 1989. Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol). Ratified 9 December 2005. African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Ratified 15 July 1998. African Charter on Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration. Ratified 6 February 2013. African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) (Ratification status unclear).
Security Agreements	OAU/AU Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa (1977). Mozambique has not ratified or signed this convention. Montreux Document (2008). Mozambique is not a signatory. International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers (ICoC) and IcoCA. Mozambique has not joined, but some extractive companies operating there (e.g., TotalEnergies, Gemfields, Eni) implement related Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR).

79 United Nations Treaty Body Database, "Mozambique – Participation in Core International Human Rights Instruments" (UNTS treaties, accessed 2025).
80 MINEC (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique), "Ratified and Signed Treaties of Mozambique," (website, accessed 2025).

Annex B

Regional, continental and international human-rights and humanitarian instruments: Mozambique's status

INSTRUMENT	DOMAIN	LEVEL	STATUS	KEY DATE(S)
ICCPR	Human rights	UN	Party (accession)	21 Jul 1993; EIF 21 Oct 1993.
ICCPR Optional Protocol (Communications)	Human rights	UN	Not a party (no acceptance)	
ICCPR Second Optional Protocol (Abolition of death penalty)	Human rights	UN	Party (accession)	21 Jul 1993; EIF 21 Oct 1993.
ICESCR	Human rights	UN	Not a party	
CERD	Human rights	UN	Party (accession)	18 Apr 1983; EIF 18 May 1983.
CEDAW	Human rights	UN	Party (accession); OPCEDAW accepted	21 Apr 1997; optional protocol accepted 4 Nov 2008.
CAT	Human rights	UN	Party (accession)	14 Sep 1999; EIF 14 Oct 1999.
OPCAT	Human rights	UN	Party (accession)	1 Jul 2014; EIF 31 Jul 2014.
CRC	Child rights	UN	Party (ratification)	26 Apr 1994; EIF 26 May 1994.
CRCOPAC (Children in armed conflict)	Child rights	UN	Party (accession)	19 Oct 2004; EIF 19 Nov 2004.
CRCOPSC (Sale/sexual exploitation)	Child rights	UN	Party (accession)	6 Mar 2003; EIF 6 Apr 2003.
CRCOPIC	Child rights	UN	Not a party	
CRPD	Disability rights	UN	Party (ratification); OPCRPD accepted	30 Jan 2012 (optional protocol same date); EIF 29 Feb 2012.
ICRMW	Migrant workers	UN	Party (ratification)	19 Aug 2013; EIF 19 Nov 2013.
ICPPED (Enforced Disappearance)	Human rights	UN	Signatory only (not ratified)	Signed 24 Dec 2008.
1949 Geneva Conventions (I–IV)	IHL	UN/ICRC	Party (accession)	14 Mar 1983; EIF 14 Sep 1983.
Additional Protocol I (1977)	IHL	UN/ICRC	Party (accession)	14 Mar 1983; EIF 14 Sep 1983.
Additional Protocol II (1977)	IHL	UN/ICRC	Party (ratification/accession)	12 Nov 2002.
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (Ottawa)	Disarmament / IHL	UN	Party (ratification)	25 Aug 1998; EIF 1 Mar 1999.

Annex B (cont.)

Regional, continental and international human-rights and humanitarian instruments: Mozambique's status

INSTRUMENT	DOMAIN	LEVEL	STATUS	KEY DATE(S)
Convention on Cluster Munitions	Disarmament / IHL	UN	Party (ratification)	14 Mar 2011; EIF 1 Sep 2011.
Chemical Weapons Convention	Disarmament	UN/OPCW	Party (accession)	June 2000.
Biological Weapons Convention	Disarmament	UN/UNODA	Party (accession)	29 Mar 2011.
1951 Refugee Convention & 1967 Protocol	Refugees	UN	Party (accession)	16 Dec 1983; Protocol 1 May 1989.
1969 OAU Refugee Convention	Refugees	AU	Party (ratification)	25 Aug 1988.
African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights	Human rights	AU	Party (ratification)	22 Feb 1989; deposit 7 Mar 1990.
Maputo Protocol (Rights of Women in Africa)	Human rights	AU	Party (ratification)	Ratified 9 Dec 2005; deposit 30 Dec 2005.
African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child	Child rights	AU	Party (ratification)	Ratified 2 Apr 2013; deposit 25 Apr 2013.
Kampala Convention (IDPs)	Protection/IDPs	AU	Party (ratification)	Ratified 2017.
African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance	Governance	AU	Signatory only (not ratified)	Signed 27 May 2010.
SADC Protocol on Gender & Development (2008, amended 2016)	Gender rights	SADC	Party (ratification)	Registered 21 Nov 2016.
Rome Statute of the ICC	International criminal justice	ICC	Signatory only (not a State Party)	Mozambique not listed among African States Parties.

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ABOVE: Internally displaced persons await the arrival of Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, in Naminawe, Mozambique, in December 2025.

Photo: Diego Menjibar Reyes / AFP