



COUNTRY UPDATE: 23 February 2024

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## Mozambique

### 1. Reports of insurgents approaching cause panic in Chiúre



Most of the population of the communities of Ocuá and Chiúre-Velho in Cabo Delgado continue to flee as a result of the latest insurgent attacks. The most recent occurred on Tuesday 20 February when they attacked the Mahipa village along the EN1, on the Lúrio River - Vila de Chiúre section. Following the attacks, chaos ensued and the population took refuge in the municipal town of Chiúre and the city of Pemba or the administrative post of Namapa, district of Eráti, Nampula Province.

Regarding this wave of displaced people, the Secretary of State of Nampula, Jaime Neto, said that while Mozambican Forces work to control the situation, his province continues to have space to welcome families who are victims of terrorism in the province of Cabo Delgado.



Residents of Chiure described a desperate situation. "For now there is no support. People don't know what to do. They are just waiting for the FDS counter-offensive, at a time when Rwandan troops have also arrived, as they say, but the suffering of people at this moment is very sad", said one 26-year-old young man who welcomed seven people into his home in the village of Chiúre. Another source said that in Mahipa village the insurgents burned at least five people's houses, a primary school and a health center.

Also on Tuesday (20), a tanker truck transporting fuel, from the company ASAMOC, was burned and the driver was injured. The truck driver explained that he came across a larger number of insurgents occupying

the road and properly armed. The attack happened shortly after the Ocuá crossing along the main road connecting Nampula and Cabo Delgado

On Tuesday 20 February the IS media page showed a photographic report in which they claimed the death of three people in the Magaia village, all of them decapitated.

Meanwhile, the governor of Cabo Delgado, Valige Tauabo, visited on Tuesday (20) Mecúfi recently attacked by insurgents. In one of these communities, the governor was informed that the group that circulated through those villages was made up of around 30 insurgents, most of them young people.

<https://cartamz.com/index.php/sociedade/item/15980-terrorismo-em-cabo-delgado-populacao-de-ocua-e-chiure-velho-continua-em-fuga-depois-do-ataque-terrorista?tmpl=component&print=1>

The crisis is already mushrooming out of control. At the beginning of this week the Mozambique government emergency management services set up a reception tent camp at Erati – on the Nampula side of the Lurio River. As of Thursday 22 February the camp had already received 5 973 families – a total of 33 202 people – 4 100 men, 6 898 women and 20 085 children, including 249 pregnant women and 60 disabled.

## 2. Prospecting for oil and gas gathers momentum in Angoche



Prospecting and extraction of oil and gas is moving ahead in Angoche, with the recent announcement by the government that four new wells will be opened. A source from the National Petroleum Institute (INP) said that two of the wells will be drilled in the Angoche region, one in the Búzi area and the other in the PT5-C area of Inhambane Province operated by Sasol. This will be the second time in almost a year that drilling has been carried out in

Angoche. Last year, ENI opened a hole that had negative results, but it was later concluded that it was necessary to evaluate it.

The population of Angoche have been closely monitoring the situation in Mocimboa Da Praia and Palma, fearing a repeat of the catastrophic events there. Already in October 2022 DHPI was told by Angoche residents that “that if petro-dollars equal conflict, then it’s just a matter of time before what happened in Palma will happen here.” And things appear to be getting off to a bad start. Angoche residents allege that there is no transparency, no consultation, no community involvement. Reinforcing this are reports of increased insurgent recruitment amongst the youth in Angoche.

<https://integritymagazine.co.mz/arquivos/23043>

### 3. Massive military spending on the cards

Following parliament's December vote to increase the 2024 military budget by 40% compared to last year, the Mozambican armed forces might be able to speed up their months-long consultation process for the acquisition of combat drones. Yet to be implemented, the budget hike should allow FADM to ramp up its counter-insurgency operations in the gas-rich Cabo Delgado province, prone to attacks from armed groups. As the SADC coalition troops withdraw, the Mozambican military is looking for ways to strengthen its own capacities, especially airborne.

Other than French group I-SEE Group (AI, 11/09/23), several drone industry leaders are in the running for the FADM contract. Those include China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp (CASC), which has presented an offer comprising four CH-3 aircraft armed with FT-9 type guided bombs. They are joined by Turkey's Baykar Makina, although it is struggling with particularly long delivery times. Baykar has proposed three TB2 drones armed with hundreds of Cirit missiles and MAM bombs produced by Rokestan. It is a pricey offer at over €100m but it could win over Israel's Elbit Systems.

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