

SECURITY AND RISK

MOZAMBIQUE

SITREP
191209-ARA001


A NUMBER OF INSURGENT ATTACKS REPORTED OVER THE LAST WEEK IN CABO DELGADO


Source	Open and Closed	Validity	Unconfirmed	Related Alerts	None
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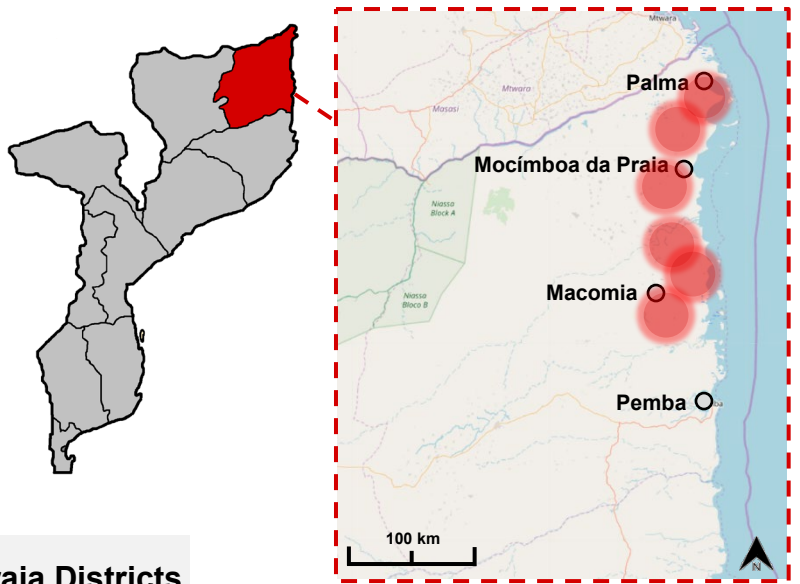
 29 November-6 December 2019

 **Armed Attacks**

 **Actor 1 – Insurgents**

 **Actor 2 – Civilians and Military**

 **Macomia, Palma and Mocímboa da Praia Districts**



INCIDENT DESCRIPTION

According to normally reliable open and privileged sources, there were a number of insurgent attacks in Cabo Delgado last week.

On Friday, 29 November, four people were killed and one person was injured in an attack on **Nacutuco** village, eight kilometres from the Mucojo Administrative Post headquarters, **Macomia District**. Sources indicate that two of the victims were beheaded, one was shot, while the other victim was burned, and several houses were set alight. Reports state the members from the Defence and Security Force (FDS) only arrived a few hours later, despite being only eight kilometres away.

On the same day, insurgents reportedly attacked **Olumbi** village, **Palma District**, killing one woman as well as destroying shops and property, and looting food supplies. Following the incident, members of the community and FDS allegedly pursued the attackers, killing four of them and capturing another four; one FDS member was killed in the battle. This incident purportedly led to the counter-insurgency which took place last week Monday, 2 December where the FDS are said to have killed eight more insurgents in Olumbi.

On Tuesday, 3 December, at around 15:00, unidentified gunmen shot at a convoy travelling on the main route between Palma and Mocímboa da Praia, at **Matapata, Palma District**. Conflicting reports have circulated regarding this ambush but the general information indicates that a convoy of between two and three vehicles, including a G4S security vehicle, was shot at, killing one person (a truck driver, said to be a Tanzanian national) and wounding another foreign national (reportedly a British citizen – who was evacuated to South Africa for medical care). The convoy was travelling towards Palma, from Mocímboa da Praia, when ambushed around 25 kilometres away from Palma district headquarters. Reports also indicate that in a separate incident, a cyclist/pedestrian/local civilian was either shot and killed, or beheaded. Unverified information suggested that the attackers were wearing uniforms belonging to the Rapid Intervention Unit (Unidade Intervenção Rápida, UIR).

On Thursday, 5 December between four and five people were shot in the **Ilala** village, Quiterajo Administrative Post, **Macomia District**. According to witnesses, at around 12:00, the young fishermen were reportedly approached by a group of five unknown men, who were said to be dressed in military uniform. The victims, who reportedly fled as soon as they were approached, were shot in the legs. Following the shooting, they were taken to a FDS unit in Pequeue village before being transferred to the Mucojo Health Centre.

On Friday, 6 December, at around 03:00, a group of unknown men entered the **Marere** village, at Mbau Administrative Post, in **Mocímboa da Praia District**. The armed men, carrying firearms and machetes reportedly killed two civilians before attacking a nearby military position. During the attack, at least ten members of the FDS were killed, and the group then stole ammunition and weapons. Some privileged information confirms that a military base, approximately 40 kilometres from Mocímboa da Praia was attacked. Open sources indicate that the Islamic State claimed this attack, through their Al Naba media platform, reportedly taking responsibility for killing 16 military personnel, while abducting another. Reports have also indicated that the attackers returned to the village later that day, killed an unknown number of women, while abducting others as well as destroying homes and belongings. Other information suggests that the Islamic State claimed an attack on the **Malali** village, in Mocímboa da Praia – it is not yet known whether this is the same incident as reports regarding the location are conflicting at this stage.

Later that day, at around 20:00, unknown attackers entered the **Ingoane** village (between Mucojo and Quiterajo), **Macomia District**, setting fire to several houses, some of which were being reconstructed from previous incidents. According to a source, no one was victimised during the attack as the villagers managed to flee as the unknown men entered the area.

RISK ANALYSIS

Current Risk Level:

The current risk of militant-orchestrated attacks in the **Macomia, Palma and Mocímboa da Praia Districts** remains **very high**.

Despite the conflicting information coming from the province, the modus operandi of the group(s) remains clear, and their actions continue to sow terror across the region.

Recently, the frequency of the attacks has noticeably increased, with last week's number of attacks taking the overall reported incident total to over 270. In addition, the overall number of fatalities now sits at over 680. These numbers are likely to be higher when considering the number of unreported incidents.

The Matapata village (where the convoy was ambushed on 3 December) has seen at least three other incidents this year, two of which occurred at the beginning of the year, while the third reportedly occurred in July. Previously unverified information indicates that at least one other roadside ambush took place this year, along the same route.

While the Islamic State claim regarding (Marere/Malali) is not yet verified, the information that has emerged with the propaganda report suggests that a number of youths are fighting in the name of the Islamic State in Mozambique. It is clear that the propaganda is making attempts to appeal to the youth in the area, with photo reports depicting well-fed, well-supplied, smiling 'fighters'.

A number of open and closed source reports are increasingly highlighting the insecurity in Cabo Delgado and paint a grim picture for the region. With no end to the insurgency in sight, the likelihood of similar attacks and ambushes in the highlighted districts is **very high**.

It remains to be seen whether or not the Russians (who reportedly returned to the conflict zone following a period of regrouping) will be able to engage the insurgents as effectively as initially thought. If not, it will be important to take note of additional role players in the region, particularly those with interests in the LNG area.

Non-essential travel in the area remains highly risky and is therefore, still not advised at this time. Should travel be unavoidable, it is recommended to avoid such travel at night. Travel management plans in this regard are essential.

Information coming from Cabo Delgado continues to be limited and, in some cases, conflicting, which makes it difficult to independently verify certain details. However, Rhula is monitoring the situation and remains in contact with privileged sources in the area. Should any specific advice be required please contact us on alerts@rhula.net to facilitate a meeting with one of our security consultants.

