



# CABO LIGADO

7 March 2024

## Cabo Ligado Update: 19 February-3 March 2024

[Cabo Ligado](#) — or ‘connected cape’ — is a Mozambique conflict observatory launched by ACLED, Zitamar News, and MediaFax.

### BY THE NUMBERS

#### Cabo Delgado, October 2017-March 2024

- Total number of political violence events: 1,747
- Total number of reported fatalities from political violence: 4,849
- Total number of reported fatalities from political violence targeting civilians: 2,078

All ACLED data are available for download via the [data export tool](#) and [curated data files](#).

### SITUATION SUMMARY

Islamic State Mozambique (ISM) continued its offensive through Chiúre district in southern Cabo Delgado province over the last two weeks, claiming responsibility for four attacks and displacing tens of thousands of civilians. Meanwhile, in central Cabo Delgado, insurgents occupied Quissanga district headquarters and Quirimba island in Ibo district, where they killed at least three security forces personnel.

In Chiúre, insurgents burned a fuel tanker on 20 February on the N1 road to Nampula province, around the crossroads at Ocua. That day, insurgents also clashed with security forces in the area without any reported casualties. Islamic State (IS) claimed on social media that the [Defense Armed Forces of Mozambique](#) had attempted to ambush its fighters, but they managed to escape. Mozambican troops and Rwanda Security Forces (RSF) based in Ancuabe were sent to pursue insurgents in Chiúre but apart from the clash at Ocua, there were no reported battles. Insurgents appeared to move with apparent freedom around the district, appearing in the villages of M'mala, Ntonhane, Micolene, amongst others.

Insurgents subsequently headed north, attacking the village of Magaia in Chiúre, approximately 35 kilometers from Ocua, on 24 February, where they claimed to have burned two churches and 140 homes. The next day, they attacked the nearby village of Muege, claiming to have burned several government buildings and forced the local population to flee. IS also claimed to have burned a church and several homes in the village of Monothe in Chiúre, which Cabo Ligado has been unable to locate so far. On 28 February, insurgents burned a church and a school in Muamula, next to Muege. After this, at least one group of insurgents left Chiúre for Ancuabe district, where they clashed with the Naparama militia on 2 March outside Ntutupue, killing seven, according to IS. Insurgents suffered two fatalities, one local source told Cabo Ligado.

A total of 91,239 civilians were displaced in Chiúre 10 February and 3 March, approximately 62% of whom

are children, according to a report from the [International Organization for Migration](#). Around 45,000 have sought refuge in Eráti district in Nampula province, while over 28,000 are scattered across displacement sites in Cabo Delgado.

In central Cabo Delgado, on 2 March, ISM entered Quissanga town and the nearby village of Mussomero without any opposition from the security forces. Insurgents tried to reassure locals that they meant no harm and were only there to buy food. However, insurgents looted one store owned by a Mozambican man, who had been forced to pay 150,000 meticaís at an ISM roadblock outside Quissanga on 15 February. President Filipe Nyusi acknowledged that insurgents were present in the area and had stolen 15 bags of goods. This insurgent group numbered up to 300 fighters and they were seen loading goods onto boats bound for Mucojo in Macomia district, one source reported.

The next day, insurgents walked to Quirimba island at low tide and beheaded at least three members of the defense and security forces (FDS). Much of the population fled into the bush, including the police. Insurgents also killed several oxen on the Gessner plantation, owned by a German settler family, and shared the meat with the locals.

On 27 February, local authorities ordered civilians on the Macomia coast between Mucojo and Quiterajo to evacuate. No reason was provided but it may be to clear the area ahead of a security forces operation. Large groups of civilians arrived in Macomia town and Quissanga and Ibo districts. Some went by boat to Quirimba island, where security forces [tried to turn them away](#) for fear of insurgent infiltrators. An order to evacuate the coast was also [issued](#) by authorities in late January but it appears to have been less effective.

Apart from the insurgency, on 19 February in Montepuez district, a group of [about 100 miners](#) armed with pick axes and machetes clashed with private security and police officers when discovered on the Montepuez Ruby Mining concession at Namanhumbir. Two miners later died from injuries sustained in the clash.

## FOCUS CHIÚRE ATTACKS

February saw ISM undertake its most sustained push into Chiúre district since the start of the insurgency. Their actions in February are notable for their relative intensity and the absence of an effective response from state forces. IS media also promoted the push much more strongly than previous incursions into Chiúre district. Along with recent attacks in Ancuabe, Mecufi, Metuge, and Quissanga and related displacement, the push has caused considerable disruption to the province's southern districts.

ISM's presence in Cabo Delgado's southern districts had been sporadic. The group's last significant push into Chiure was in October 2022. For that month, ACLED records its involvement in seven political violence events with seven fatalities. Of these, there was just one clash with state forces, the others being attacks on civilians, which accounted for all seven fatalities in Chiure that month. In February 2024, ACLED records 11 political violence events in the district. Among these events, ISM engaged in one clash with state forces and one with the Naparama militia, which doesn't bear firearms. In total, insurgents killed 12 civilians and a further three unarmed Naparama militiamen.

As in October 2022, there was no significant response from state forces in the past month, with ISM fighters seemingly able to move at will through the district, as far south as the Lurio river bordering Nampula province. According to reports, RSF, likely those based in Ancuabe, were not involved in the response until 21 February near Ocuá in the south of the district. Between 21 February and the end of the month, ACLED records at least five incidents of violence against civilians by ISM in the district.

IS media channels also heavily promoted this month's incursion into Chiúre district. In February, IS released

three photo reports that focused on actions in Chiúre, containing 43 photographs, and 12 claims for specific incidents. Prior to February, IS had released just four claims for Chiúre district, all for incidents that occurred in 2022. Almost 50% of the photographs were of the destruction of churches, “Christian schools,” and crosses in Muirota, Nacoja, Nacossa, and Nguira villages. There were also shots of destruction in offices attached to the catholic church in Mazeze, attacked on 9 February.

The Chiure attacks have greatly disrupted the south, [displacing over 90,000 people](#) between 10 February and 3 March, over half of whom have fled to Nampula province. They will also stretch both Mozambique’s FDS and the RSF stationed at Ancuabe. Sustained attacks in the south present a threat to the stability of Nampula, through the arrival of the displaced, to the main transport routes out of Pemba, and most of all to residents of the southern districts.

## ROUND-UP

### *Mozambique ratifies Rwanda extradition treaty*

On 29 February, Mozambique's parliament [ratified](#) a controversial extradition treaty with Rwanda, sparking concerns about the potential persecution of exiled dissidents. Despite assurances from Minister for Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs Helena Kida, fears persist among Rwandan refugees in Mozambique, who worry about being targeted by Kigali. Human Rights Watch has [reported](#) attempted kidnappings of Rwandans in Mozambique under suspicious circumstances since the arrival of the RSF.

### *TotalEnergies pushes US to release funding for Mozambique LNG*

TotalEnergies is [urging US EXIM Bank](#) to release around \$4.7bn in guaranteed loans for its Mozambique LNG project in Cabo Delgado. EXIM bank is [reportedly concerned](#) about the security situation in the province. Other banks, namely Korea Eximbank and Dutch Atradius, are also yet to make a decision on releasing loans. TotalEnergies likely believes that if the US approves of the project, then others will follow. TotalEnergies chief executive Patrick Pouyanné told investors that the company is “in the process of reactivating operations with all financial institutes across the world.”

### *Algeria pledges support for Local Force in Cabo Delgado*

The Algerian government has [pledged](#) immediate support for Mozambique's [Local Force](#) fighting IS in Cabo Delgado. The force is mainly composed of veterans of the liberation war, many of whom received training in Algeria. The details of the support have not yet been announced, but President Nyusi said that Algerians were “touched” when they heard that some of these veterans were fighting insurgents underequipped.

### *Nyusi raises concerns over Tanzania border*

President Nyusi [urged](#) the police’s Frontier Guard to be extra vigilant on the Tanzania border. Speaking to police in Mueda on 22 February, he stated that “with the United Republic of Tanzania, it is the route they prefer to use,” referring to ISM. A week later, speaking at the end of his visit to Algeria, he said that some of the insurgency’s “mentors” were coming from neighboring countries, including “countries supporting us in this fight.” He was likely referring to Tanzania. In Addis Ababa recently, President Nyusi positively [remarked](#) on Tanzania’s support of counterinsurgency efforts, both as part of SAMIM and bilaterally. is based at Mandimba in Nangade district, less than 30 km from an RSF base at Pundanhar in neighboring Palma district.

