



PEACEMAKING ADVISORY GROUP (PAG) – CABO DELGADO
MULTISTAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS REPORT V
30 OCTOBER – 24 NOVEMBER 2023

ENQUIRIES

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- Both the Secretary of State António Njanje Taimo Supeia and Police Commissioner Assane Fikir Nyito highlighted the importance of understanding why people join or defect from ASWJ. In this respect, Commissioner Nyito agreed to facilitate PAG's access to prisons to interview inmates from ASWJ. This research will help to strengthen Mozambique's response strategy and to inform policies to undermine ASWJ's ability to recruit and radicalise new members and contribute to wider preventing and countering violent extremism programming.
- Representatives from Cabo Delgado's conflict-affected communities, civil and religious leaders, and security experts voiced major concerns regarding a potential drawdown of the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) force from Mozambique and the negative impact this would have on the security landscape in Cabo Delgado.
- Since November 2022, political violence carried out by ASWJ has [steadily decreased](#), and since July 2023, been predominantly concentrated areas along the coast and in Catupa forest of Macomia district, Mocímboa da Praia and Muidumbe districts. From an estimated 2 500 fighters during 2021, current estimates suggest between 150 and 500 active fighters remain. ASWJ has also suffered losses amongst its leadership. Abu Yassir Hassan is still thought to be out of action since a car accident in early 2023, and in August, Bonomade Machude Omar was killed by FADM troops.
- Despite gains made against ASWJ by security forces, the group remains active and able to carry out attacks on civilian targets and security forces across multiple districts in Cabo Delgado. The group continues to maintain support from transnational jihadist networks, including active armed groups based in both Somalia and the DRC. The recent uptick in the use of IEDs to minimise casualties amongst its fighters and other tactical changes demonstrates ASWJ's ability to adapt and survive.
- A withdrawal of SAMIM forces could present an opportunity for ASWJ to again increase its operational tempo and expand into districts currently within SAMIM's area of operations. These include Macomia, Meluco, Muidumbe, and Nangade districts. This risk of this scenario is high, given the absence of a handover and withdrawal strategy, and persistent capacity issues within FADM.
- Given the current humanitarian crisis in Cabo Delgado, in addition to risks posed by a rainy season which is expected to see above average rainfall, an increase in attacks by ASWJ and further displacement of citizens would exacerbate an already difficult situation. It would also reverse strategic gains made by SAMIM under its Scenario 5 multidimensional deployment mandate, which includes a civilian mission component designed to engage communities and build human security.

1. INTRODUCTION

Between 30 October and 24 November 2023, representatives of the Peacemaking Advisory Group (PAG) travelled to the United Republic of Tanzania, the Republic of Mozambique, and to the Republic of South Africa as part of the PAG's ongoing efforts to advance peace, security, and development in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique. The objective of the visit was to prepare and implement PAG's programme of activities for the next six-to-twelve-month period. In addition to reengaging trusted local partners to determine the best pathway forward, the PAG held expansive consultations with civil society, government, and private sector actors at the local, national, and regional level. A third round of community consultations were held with civil society and religious leaders from across Cabo Delgado. PAG representatives also revisited Metuge district internally displaced persons (IDP) camp and consulted with partners in the humanitarian sector to receive an updated picture of the humanitarian challenges facing conflict-affected communities. This was the PAG's fifth visit to Cabo Delgado.

2. SCOPE

This report will provide an overview of insights garnered from consultations on the current political, security, and humanitarian environment in Cabo Delgado and the wider region as well as indicate the PAG's strategic focus going forward.

3. POLITICAL

3.1 On 11 October, local municipal elections were held in sixty-five (65) municipalities across Mozambique, despite ongoing security challenges in parts of Cabo Delgado. Following the announcement of results, which saw FRELIMO win 64 of the 65 municipalities contested, opposition parties denounced the elections, alleging voting irregularities and calling for a vote-recount in several municipalities. President of RENAMO, Ossufo Momade, called on citizens to participate in a peaceful demonstration to protest alleged electoral irregularities. Demonstrations resulted in some instances of violence, where protestors clashed with police, including two deaths in Chiure, Cabo Delgado and one in Nacala.

3.2 During the PAG's visit, the Constitutional Council, the country's highest body in matters of constitutional and electoral law, was investigating the validity of allegations of electoral fraud and preparing recommendations on a pathway forward.

3.3 On 24 November, following the investigation into electoral fraud allegations, the Constitutional Council announced the final outcome of the elections. The Constitutional Council declared FRELIMO to have won fifty-six municipalities out of the sixty-five; RENAMO to have won four (Quelimane, Chiure, Vilanculos and Alto Molocue); and MDM to have won the Municipality of Beira. In its ruling, the Constitutional Council also called for some electoral reforms.

3.4 While the spread of violent demonstrations and clashes between citizens and police has been contained, tensions surrounding local elections may indicate a heightened risk of insecurity during Mozambique's general elections, to be held in 2024.

4. SECURITY

4.1 Representatives from Cabo Delgado's conflict-affected communities, civil and religious leaders, and security experts voiced major concerns regarding a potential drawdown of the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) force from Mozambique and the negative impact this would have on the security landscape in Cabo Delgado.

4.2 While the general security situation in Cabo Delgado has seen improvements, the non-state armed group (NSAG) Ahlu-Sunnah wal Jama'a (ASWJ) continues to operate in several provincial districts, with deadly attacks recorded in Macomia, Mocimboa da Praia, and Chiure districts during the month of October. While PAG was in Cabo Delgado, the ASWJ group attacked the village of Mapate reportedly burning 30 houses. This followed an attack a week earlier, on 10 November, on the village of Novo in Macomia district where four people were killed.

4.3 There is also further indication of a strategic shift by ASWJ, where the group is attempting to win "hearts and minds" among some communities through increased trade and relationship building.

4.4 The increasing use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) by ASWJ represents a growing challenge to security forces. Between 11 September and 01 October, the Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for multiple IED attacks on military patrols in Macomia and Mocimboa da Praia districts. The use of IEDs indicates a growth in ASWJ's technical capacity. It may also indicate an increased operational support through regional networks.

4.5 A Delegation from the African Union Political Affairs Peace and Security Department led by the Director of Conflict Management, Dr Alhaji Sarjoh Bah, arrived on a three-day field mission in Pemba, on 15 November 2023. The mission took place within the

context of the AU Commission's provision of support to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to enhance engagement and joint efforts in supporting the Government of the Republic of Mozambique in conflict in Cabo Delgado. Accordingly, the AU donated equipment and materials to support SAMIM, made possible by a \$100 million grant to the AU from China. The donated equipment includes protective assault vehicles, military utility trucks, mine detectors, generators, personnel protective gear, tentages, sleeping bags, beds and mattresses, computers, printers, cameras, conference furniture, projectors, sound systems and other accessories.

4.6 During the same week, a SADC Field Assessment Mission (FAM) visited Mozambique and held consultations in both Maputo and Pemba. The FAM's findings will be used by the SADC Organ Troika to decide whether SAMIM commences with a gradual drawdown of forces or considers other options, including extending its mandate. Depending on the findings of the FAM, the drawdown could potentially commence on 15 December 2023 and a complete withdrawal concluded by 16 July 2024, in line with the end of the current SAMIM extension period. The PAG engaged with members of the FAM as part of FAM's mandate to engage with a cross-section of stakeholders.

4.7 A withdrawal of SAMIM would require counter-insurgency responsibilities in SAMIM's current area of operations to be filled by branches of the Mozambican Defence Armed Forces (FADM) and Local Forces. Consultations with several sources indicate that despite counterinsurgency training, significant concerns remain as to FADM's current capacity to effectively fill the security vacuum created by a SAMIM withdrawal. While Local Forces have proven an effective counterinsurgency partner in certain districts, they are viewed by some communities as an ethnic militia, which risks exacerbating social tensions over the longer term. The PAG also recorded reported recent instances of human rights violations by Local Forces in Muede. Poor levels of citizen trust towards a security force can generate new social grievances and be counterproductive to preventing and countering violent extremism.

4.8 Currently, there is no withdrawal and handover strategy between SAMIM and Mozambican security forces. This heightens the risk of ASWJ increasing attacks and widening its area of operations if a security vacuum is created. It also poses reputational risks for SAMIM if a withdrawal and handover is not managed effectively.

4.9 The rehabilitation and reintegration of former arms carriers was highlighted as a critical issue during engagements with the Secretary of State for Cabo Delgado, António Njanje Taimo Supeia and Provincial Police Commissioner, Assane Fikir

Nyito. While plans to develop three rehabilitation and reintegration centres in Cabo Delgado remain, funding and other technical issues for their establishment continue to be stumbling blocks.

4.10 Both the Secretary of State António Njanje Taimo Supeia and Police Commissioner Assane Fikir Nyito highlighted the importance of understanding why people join or defect from ASWJ. In this respect, Commissioner Nyito agreed to facilitate PAG's access to prisons to interview inmates from ASWJ. This research will help to strengthen Mozambique's response strategy and to inform policies to undermine ASWJ's ability to recruit and radicalise new members and contribute to wider preventing and countering violent extremism programming.

5 HUMANITARIAN

5.1 Cabo Delgado continues to face critical humanitarian challenges. Above-average rainfall during the current rainy season has contributed both to increased food insecurity and the spread of water-borne disease. In November, Montepuez saw an outbreak of cholera. While the spread has been contained, Montepuez is the fifth district in Cabo Delgado to record cholera cases this year. Others include Pemba, Mocimboa da Praia, Meuda, and Chiure. This highlights the risks insufficient sanitation, health services, and clean drinking water pose to human security in the province, particularly as IDPs look to return to their places of origin.

5.2 In October 2023, the United Nations [highlighted](#) the critical shortage of funding for humanitarian programming in Cabo Delgado. As of 20 November, the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) RP is 35 per cent funded having received U\$180 million out of a total \$512 million requested. The lack of adequate resources continues to restrict humanitarian ability to mount a robust response to the humanitarian crisis in Cabo Delgado particularly with multisector and integrated second line responses, including food security and livelihood generation; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); shelter; as well as access to health, education, and protection services.

5.3 The precise number of IDPs generated by the conflict in Cabo Delgado and those who have chosen to return to their places of origin remains difficult to accurately access. In November, UNOCHA [estimated](#) that approximately 571,000 people have returned home since the end of 2021 while 668, 939 remain displaced. However, attacks continue to generate new waves of IDPs. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) attacks by ASWJ in September and the beginning of October 2023 resulted in the displacement of approximately 7000 people in Mocimboa da Praia and Macomia districts.

5.4 The PAG visited, for the second time, an IDP camp in Metuge district. Discussions were held with a cross section of IDPs – youth, women, local business owners operating within the camp, as well as IOM camp clinic staff. Since a previous visit to the camp in March 2023, roughly two-thirds of the 15 000 registered at the camp have returned to their places of origin or left to a different region. Respondents outlined various push and pull factors which influenced their decision to return or remain in the camps. Those who had chosen to remain in the camp, cited continued fear of insecurity in their home district of Quissanga; a lack of access to financial and material support to rebuild their homes and farms, destroyed during ASWJ attacks; as well as opportunities for trading and livelihood generation, healthcare, and education provided in the camps. Respondents interviewed at Metuge IDP camp highlighted difficulties in accurately assessing whether it was safe to return to their places or origin, given low levels of access to reliable information and ability to communicate with their home communities. They emphasized the need for financial and social support programmes to allow them to return and rebuild their homes and businesses destroyed during the conflict.

6 GENDER ISSUES

6.1 Tailoring responses which speak to the disproportionate impact conflict and displacement have had on women and girls in Cabo Delgado remains a challenge. As highlighted by the Gender Officer seconded to SAMIM, due to cultural norms, engaging women within IDP camps and local communities can be difficult, with men often acting as gatekeepers. The officer also emphasized women and girls' increased risk of rape and gender-based violence in IDP camps and the need for increased protection services in this regard.

6.2 The closure of health facilities due to conflict has exacerbated an already low baseline of access to quality sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls in Cabo Delgado. This has resulted in increased levels of teenage and childhood pregnancies fuelling intergenerational poverty.

6.3 During consultations, the issue of women and girls who had left or escaped from ASWJ but were unable to return to their former communities due to stigmatisation was highlighted. Specialised psycho-social support and care programming will likely be required for this population to minimise the risk of their return to ASWJ.

7 REGIONAL

7.1 In September 2023, the Namoto border crossing was reopened by the Tanzanian authorities. The border post has been closed since July 2021 due to insecurity which has had a negative impact on local communities in the region who share cross-border cultural, familial, and trade ties.

7.2 Consultations with private sector and civil society partners in Tanzania revealed further delays to envisioned liquid natural gas projects in the Mtwara and Lindi regions due to slow progress in the negotiations between the government of Tanzania and a consortium of national and international energy companies.

7.3 Consultations were held between the PAG and a representative from the Southern African Development Community Regional Counter-Terrorism Centre (SADC RCTC). The Centre has made significant progress towards its mandate and possibilities for how the PAG could contribute towards capacity building exercises being facilitated between the SADC RCTC and Member States' National Counter-Terrorism Centres (NTCs) were discussed.

8 LIST OF ENGAGEMENTS

- SAMIM
- Diplomatic Missions
- Government
- IDPs and conflict-affected communities
- Religious Leaders
- Civil Society Leaders
- Development partners
- Private sector actors

ABOUT THE PEACEMAKING ADVISORY GROUP

Objective - The purpose of the Peacemaking Advisory Group (PAG) is to create a platform for engagement to ensure all communities are heard, based on mutual respect and *ubuntu*, to de-escalate intercommunal tensions and unlock development potential.

Membership - The PAG is a regional civil society-led initiative that is politically neutral and harnesses the experience and expertise of its constituent members to support peace and development in Southern Africa through listening and dialogue.

The PAG is chaired by Bishop Trevor Mwamba, Bishop of the Anglican Church, and President of the United National Independence Party (UNIP), and comprises the following members:

- Ms. Alice Mogwe, Executive Director of Ditshwanelo (Botswana Human Rights Centre), and President of the International Federation of Human Rights.
- Sheikh Aminuddin Muhammad Ibrahim, President of the Islamic Council of Mozambique, State Council member of the Current President, President of the Council of Religions of Mozambique, and Founder of the Hamza Institute.
- Bishop Dinis Matsolo, President of the Justice, Peace, and Reconciliation Commission of Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM) and Executive Director of PIRCOM, Republic of Mozambique.
- Ms. Fatma Karume, leading Human Rights Lawyer, United Republic of Tanzania.
- Sheikh Nassurulahe Intizame Dula, President of the Islamic Congress of Mozambique in Cabo Delgado
- Ambassador Roeland van de Geer, Chairman of the European Board of Good Governance Africa and former Ambassador of the Netherlands to Mozambique.

The PAG has the support of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG), comprised of distinguished leaders from the region, as well as an advisory council comprising a broad range of experienced peacebuilding and development specialist.