



PEACEMAKING ADVISORY GROUP (PAG) – CABO DELGADO
MULTISTAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS REPORT VI
21 JANUARY - 11 FEBRUARY 2024

ENQUIRIES

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- Given the recent increase in attacks by Ahlu Sunnah Wa Jama (ASWJ), the Government of Mozambique and SAMIM should reconsider the July 2024 end of mission date and advocate for SAMIM to extend its deployment.
- As SAMIM prepares to withdraw, continued monitoring throughout the withdrawal phase is crucial to keeping vulnerable communities safe.
- The PAG encourages government, religious, social and community leaders to initiate and maintain platforms for dialogue to address the root causes of violence in Cabo Delgado.
- In view of increased insecurity and imminent withdrawal of SAMIM, the PAG advises that comprehensive strategy for peace in Cabo Delgado be urgently formulated, bringing together both military and civil society programmes of action, to address the deteriorating security situation in the province.
- The winner of the upcoming Frelimo Central Committee vote should be included in the development of this strategy as he or she will be key to decisions and response measures implemented regarding the future of Cabo Delgado and the withdrawal of SAMIM forces.
- It had appeared that ASWJ activities were on the decrease. However, recently, after the announcement of the withdrawal of SAMIM, ASWJ has increased their visibility with several attacks in different districts in the province.
- The recent offensive of ASWJ attacks in districts under the sectors covered by the Rwandan forces and FADM poses a serious threat to other sectors once SAMIM withdraws.
- The withdrawal of SAMIM forces shall present an opportunity for ASWJ to again increase its operational tempo and expand into districts currently within SAMIM's area of operations. This risk of this scenario is high, given the persistent capacity issues within FADM.

1. INTRODUCTION

Between 21 January and 11 February 2024, representatives of the Peacemaking Advisory Group (PAG) travelled to 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 implement PAG's programme of community engagement activities through the promotion of dialogue. In addition to reengaging trusted local partners to determine the best pathway forward, the PAG held extensive consultations with civil society, government, and private sector actors at local, national, and regional levels. A fourth round of community consultations were held with civil society and religious leaders from across Cabo Delgado. PAG representatives also travelled twice to Montepuez the second largest city in the province to engage with Sheikh Cessario leader of the Islamic Community who oversees 157 mosques. During the second visit the PAG held a focus group session with various Islamic community members from different mosques. The composition of the focus group included both male and female youth representatives, as well as community elders. The purpose of the focus group session was to:

- Provide communities a platform for dialogue.
- Better understand the underlying drivers and level of support for the insurgency.
- Assess whether government response measures were effective.
- Determine whether local response measures were being formulated and implemented in response to the insurgency.
- Understand the humanitarian challenges facing the conflict-affected communities.

The PAG would like to emphasise that the increased insurgent activity, the intended withdrawal of SAMIM, the paucity of meaningful dialogue and the absence of a well formulated comprehensive approach, combining civil and military components, all need to be addressed by Government as a matter of priority.

This was the PAG's sixth 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** The upcoming Frelimo Central Committee vote on 05-06 April to select the next presidential candidate, to succeed President Filipe Nyusi carries an added risk of fracturing the party as the nation readies itself for the general election on 9 October 2024. According to the 2024 budget allocation, the election is expected to cost around 6.5 billion meticaís (€96.3 million).

3.2 While the next Frelimo leader is touted to come from the central region, the following remain potential leading presidential candidates for the party:

- Agriculture Minister Celso Correia
- Former Prime Minister Luisa Diogo
- Former Prime Minister Alberto Vaquina
- Former Minister José Pacheco
- Former Minister Basilio Monteiro
- Samora Machel Jr, son of Mozambique's first president Samora Machel
- Police Chief Bernardino Rafael

3.3 The internal political landscape of the opposition party RENAMO, also poses a threat to political stability because no presidential candidate has been voted in. Mr. Ossufo Momade, the party leader, has not yet convened a RENAMO Congress. As per RENAMO statutes, a Congress should be held every five years, with the last one occurring in January 2019.

4. SECURITY

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

4.2 During the PAG's previous mission in November, it appeared that ASWJ activities were on the decrease. However, recently, ironically after the announcement of the withdrawal of SAMIM, ASWJ has increased their visibility with attacks in different districts in the province - Macomia, Nangade, Muidumbe and Quissanga. This has caused panic among the local population, resulting in displacement of people as fear prevails.

4.3 The Mozambican Defence Armed Forces (FADM) does not seem able to maintain and control the deteriorating security situation to counter or deter attacks by ASWJ. It appears the increased attacks follows on from a recent announcement by the spokesperson of the Islamic State (IS), Abu Hudhayfah Al – Ansari, proclaiming a “new global military campaign”, pledging to intensify attacks across the world.

4.5 Several violent confrontations by ASWJ were recorded against FADM and some civilian populations. The attacks highlighted some of FADM's limitations in curbing ASWJ's threat. While PAG were in country, the ASWJ attacks focussed more on FADM areas of responsibility with little or no targeted attacks recorded against SAMIM forces.

4.6 The ASWJ fighters appear to be moving southwards with some attacks being recorded within a 40km radius from the Pemba district. This new movement is a cause for concern as not only is SAMIM headquartered in Pemba but also numerous

humanitarian organisations trying to alleviate the dire situation. Additionally, ASWJ fighters were recorded travelling on foot and by boat in the coastal area of Olumbua, Lumua, Naunde, Massano and on the banks of the river Muera.

- 4.7 Shortly after the PAG departed, on 19 February 2024, ASWJ attacked a FADM position in Mucojo district. Analysts have claimed it as the deadliest attack on FADM since 2021. The attack resulted in the death of approximately 25 FADM soldiers with several injuries. SAMIM assisted with a rescue mission.
- 4.8 In Chuire, attacks were reported on predominantly Christians and those not following ASWJ's rules in line with their version of Islam. Houses, churches, government buildings, businesses, schools and livelihoods were destroyed during these attacks. These atrocities resulted in populations being displaced and forced to flee to the south in the direction of Namapa in Nampula Province.
- 4.9 A withdrawal of SAMIM would require counter-insurgency responsibilities in SAMIM's current area of operations to be filled by branches of 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.
- 4.10 The district of Chuire falls within the sector covered by the Rwandan forces and FADM where ASWJ continue with their attacks. This poses a serious threat to other sectors once SAMIM withdraws. An escalation in violent attacks is anticipated throughout Cabo Delgado. ASWJ fighters continue in their movement southward from Mucojo in the Macomia District, crossing into the Quissanga district and roaming through the districts of Metuge, Ancuabe, Mecufi, and Chiure, with some extending as far as the Lúrio river bordering Nampula province. They are ambushing civilians and security forces en route. Despite the rainy season, which could have deterred their activities, they persist in their attacks. The group has sustained its operations through the rainy periods of January and into February 2024.

5. HUMANITARIAN

- 5.1 Cabo Delgado continues to grapple with the impact of climate change, notably extreme heat and torrential rains that are wreaking havoc on infrastructure, including vital roads connecting the province with the rest of the country. This has resulted in the collapse of the Napacala River crossing on National Highway 380 (EN380) in Macomia. The situation poses risks to the districts of Muidumbe, Nangade, Mueda, Mocímboa da Praia, and Palma throughout the rainy season. The bridge collapse over the Napacala River in Macomia not only hampers civilian movement but also that of SAMIM forces.

- 5.2 During the focus group session in Montepuez it was shared that there are little to no national, provincial or local initiatives to assist the vulnerable communities. Community members expressed their frustrations of not being heard when they raised initial concerns about the number of new people streaming into the city – IDPs. In essence they were acting as a community early warning system, but their warnings were not prioritised by the authorities.
- 5.3 Focus group discussions and key informant interviews revealed the extent to which unresolved intracommunity tensions between Islamic organisations continue to undermine social cohesion in Cabo Delgado.
- 5.4 The International Organization for Migration (IOM) [reported](#) by 16 February 2014, 2046, IDPs had arrived in Chuire. As the IDPs' numbers increased, while others fled to escape Chiure town, heading north along the N1 main road for 30 kilometres to Metoro and toward Pemba, or south for 35 kilometres on the N1 to cross the Lurio river to Nampula province. Videos depicting hundreds of people fleeing Chiure and journeying south to Nampula province are circulating on news and social media platforms.
- 5.5 The provincial government of Nampula province opened a reception centre in Eráti for IDPs from Chiure. According to the Eráti district administrator, Manuel Salimo Manussa at the end of February, 13,640 people had registered.
- 5.6 On 27 February 2024, Mozambique's Cabinet declared an orange alert for the country because of intense rainfall in the northern and central regions and the drought in the south. Filimão Suaze, spokesperson for the Council of Ministers, stated that the declaration of the orange alert sets up legal protocols for initiating emergency operational centres at national and district levels, mobilising resources including personnel, finances, and materials, and enhancing public consciousness to facilitate the relocation of communities from regions susceptible to natural disasters.
- 5.7 According to IOM's January 2024 assessment, displaced people in Cabo Delgado have fallen to 542,535 and 601,866 people have returned home. Of these, 181,781 displaced people have returned to Mocimboa da Praia and 121,177 to Palma districts. IOM recorded 8,537 people newly displaced in January. Of those, 3000 had been displaced more than four times already, while only 1000 were newly displaced for the first time.

6. GENDER ISSUES

- 6.1 During the above-mentioned attacks, reports indicate several instances of brutal human right violations committed by the ASWJ including beheadings, killings, sexual violence violations and looting.
- 6.2 With the continuing attacks on the civilian population, the efficacy of health facilities become strained. Access to quality sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls in Cabo Delgado remains a dire concern. This will impact on increased levels of teenage and childhood pregnancies fuelling intergenerational poverty.

- 6.3 During community consultations in Montepuez, 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 also 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 On 7 February 2024, Patrick Pouyanne, the CEO of Total Energies, expressed he anticipates the company will resume construction and natural gas exploration activities in Cabo Delgado by the end of 2024. He committed to continuous monitoring of the situation on the ground. He indicated progress with stakeholders and expressed their intention to revive the project pending the reactivation of global financing. The implementation of these gas projects holds the potential to contribute to mitigating poverty and social challenges in the country, although the ongoing insurgency could potentially impede progress. Deloitte Consulting Company recently projected that the natural gas projects could yield approximately USD 100 million in revenue for Mozambique.
- 7.2 Director General of Exxon Mobil, Arne Gibbs stated on 22 February 2024, that the company has continuously maintained its natural gas operations in the Rovuma basin without interruption. He emphasised that Exxon Mobil is collaborating closely with the Defence and Security Forces and the Mozambican government to guarantee the security of the project.

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.
- Ambassador Roeland van de Geer, 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.

We dedicate this report in memoriam of Sheikh Nassurulahe Intizame Dula, President of the Islamic Congress of Mozambique in Cabo Delgado and member of the PAG who died in January. Sheikh Dula was committed to peace and promoting dialogue in Cabo Delgado.

We commend his soul to God to rest in eternal peace