

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

Mozambique Monthly Briefing October 2021

Mozambique Summary 19 October 2021

Forças de Defesa e Segurança (FDS) (Mozambican defence and security forces) kill Renamo Military Junta (RMJ) leader Mario Nhongo in Cheringoma district (Sofala Province). With no obvious successor, his death may spell the end of the RMJ, as Renamo encourages remaining members to join the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) process. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) announces it will stay in Mozambique “indefinitely”, following a joint meeting of the active forces fighting the insurgent groups in Cabo Delgado. President Filipe Nyusi (2019-present) announces an easing of Covid-19 restrictions as Mozambique’s “third wave” of infections ebbs. Labour and social security minister Margaride Talapa claims that more than 97% of companies that closed due to the impact of Covid-19 have reopened.

Renamo military junta leadership vacuum ...

Forças de Defesa e Segurança (FDS) (defence and security forces) shot and killed the leader of the self-proclaimed **Renamo Military Junta (RMJ)**, **Mario Nhongo**, on 11 October in an exchange of fire in **Cheringoma** district (**Sofala Province**).¹ **Polícia da República de Moçambique (PRM)** (Mozambique police force) commander **Bernadino Fafael** announced in a media briefing on 11 October that Nhongo and his group had opened fire on the FDS patrol unit.² Nhongo was the leader of the faction that split from main opposition party **Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Renamo)** in mid-2019, following the denouncement of Renamo leader **Ossufo Momade** as a “*traitor*” for signing the peace agreement with ruling party **Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Frelimo)** and President **Filipe Nyusi** (2019-present) in August 2019.³ Under Nhongo’s leadership, the RMJ was responsible for several ambush attacks on vehicles in the provinces of **Manica** and **Sofala** in 2020, killing more than 30 people.⁴

Nhongo’s death may spell the end of the RMJ, which has no clear successor to lead the breakaway group. Following his death, Renamo released a press statement urging the remaining RMJ members to join the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) process of Renamo militia, which formed part of the 2019 peace agreement.⁵ To date, more than 2,600 former Renamo fighters have joined the DDR process.⁶ Several members of the RMJ have accepted the DDR process, and this year only one attack has been attributed to the group.⁷ Without an obvious successor to lead the RMJ, more ex-Renamo militia may be encouraged to join the process.

A statement issued by the **United Nations (UN)** secretary general’s personal envoy to **Mozambique**, **Mirko Manzoni**, on 11 October described Nhongo’s death as “*regrettable*” but acknowledged that the Mozambique government had made efforts to resolve the situation peacefully and that attempts to conduct dialogue with RMJ had proven unsuccessful.⁸

¹ TVM, 11 Oct 2021

² TVM, 11 Oct 2021

³ TVM, 11 Oct 2021

⁴ AIM, 14 Oct 2021

⁵ AIM, 14 Oct 2021

⁶ Lusa, 15 Oct 2021

⁷ AIM, 14 Oct 2021

⁸ United Nations press statement, 11 Oct 2021

... as SADC forces to stay “indefinitely” in Cabo Delgado

Southern African Development Community (SADC) forces will remain indefinitely in Mozambique’s **Cabo Delgado Province**. Following the Extraordinary Summit of the **SADC Organ Troika Plus** in **Pretoria (South Africa)** on 5 October, SADC said it would extend the **SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM)** beyond October.⁹ SAMIM special representative **Mpho Molomo** stated on 14 October that the SADC forces will stay in Mozambique until the situation on the ground is “*under control*”, and that SADC plans to send more ground forces to Cabo Delgado to hold the areas that have been retaken from the insurgent group **Al Sunna wa Jama’a**, known locally as **al-Shabaab**.¹⁰

The joint forces have made several advances. **Forças Armadas de Defesa de Moçambique (FADM)** (Mozambican armed defence forces) commander **Christóvão Chume** claimed on 13 October that joint forces have identified and dismantled all known insurgency bases in Cabo Delgado province.¹¹ Speaking to the **Special Forces Training School** in **Makandzene** outside the capital, **Maputo**, on 7 October, President Nyusi announced that the joint forces had killed one of the insurgent group leaders, **Muhamudu**, known to have ordered the massacre of 52 people, mainly youth, in **Muidumbe** district in Cabo Delgado in April 2020 (see *ARC Briefing Mozambique May 2020*).¹² However, during a meeting of the commands of the military forces involved in fighting the insurgent groups, the **Rwanda National Defence Force (RDF)**, the **Rwanda National Police (RNP)**, the SADC force and FADM, on 13 October in the recently reclaimed town of **Mocimboa da Praia**, Chume said the recent advances did not mean the fight was over.¹³

According to the division of responsibility among the allied forces, the Rwandan troops are mainly working in the north-east districts of **Palma** and **Mocimboa**, whilst SAMIM is working in the neighbouring **Nangade** district and the districts south of Mocimboa, namely Muidimbe district, **Macomia** district and **Quissanga** district.¹⁴ The Rwandan forces originally comprised 800 troops and 200 police, but Rwanda’s President **Paul Kagame** (2000-present) announced at the **Global Security Forum (GSF)** in **Doha (Qatar)** on 12 October that there are closer to 2,000 Rwandan troops in Mozambique.¹⁵ The meeting of the allied forces also decided to establish a new joint command of operations that will be led from Maputo and include teams from Mozambique, Rwanda and SADC.¹⁶

The SAMIM extension and improved coordination of the joint forces mission in Cabo Delgado increases the likelihood of a more sustainable advance against the insurgent groups in northern Mozambique.

Economy recovers as Covid-19 third wave recedes

The “*third wave*” of **Covid-19** infections appears to have ebbed as the number of active Covid-19 cases continues to decrease in Mozambique.¹⁷ On 18 October, Mozambique recorded 10 new cases of Covid-19, bringing the number of active cases to 711.¹⁸ As of 19 October, Mozambique had recorded a total of 151,112 cases of Covid-19 in its population of approximately 31.5 million, with 1,927 Covid-19-related deaths and 148,474 recoveries.¹⁹ Based on the time between Mozambique’s second and third waves of infection, there should be at least two to three months until another Covid-19 wave hits (see below).

⁹ Times Live, 5 Oct 2021

¹⁰ Bloomberg, 14 Oct 2021

¹¹ VOA Portugues, 14 Oct 2021

¹² Lusa, 8 Oct 2021

¹³ VOA Portugues, 14 Oct 2021

¹⁴ AIM, 14 Oct 2021

¹⁵ Rwanda TV, 12 Oct 2021

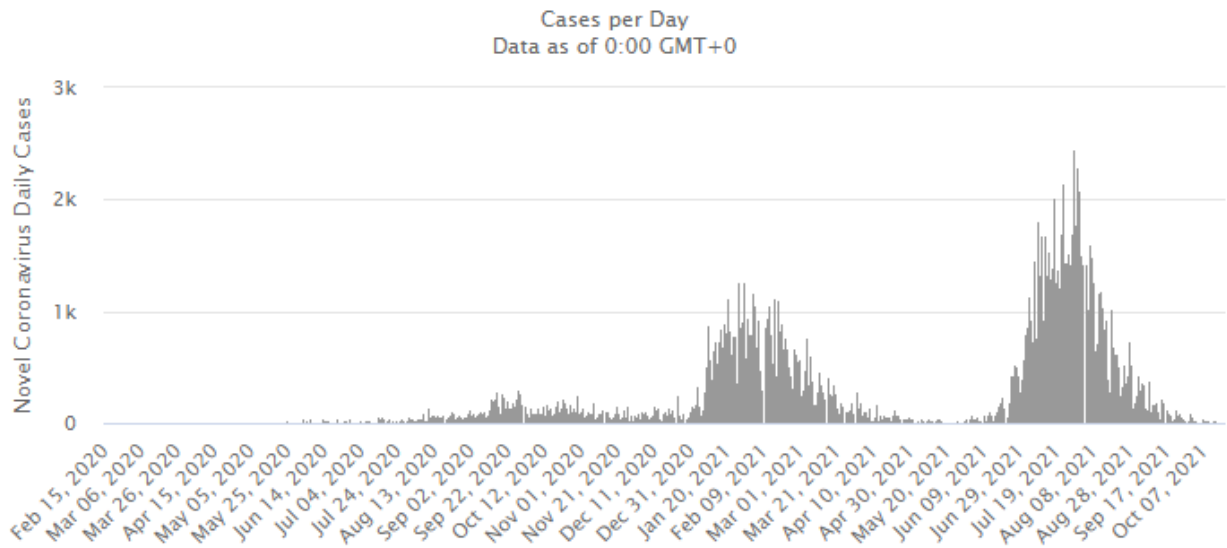
¹⁶ VOA Portugues, 14 Oct 2021

¹⁷ Xinhua, 24 Sep 2021

¹⁸ Worldometer Coronavirus, accessed 19 Oct 2021

¹⁹ Worldometer Coronavirus, 19 Oct 2021

Daily New Cases



Source: Worldometer Coronavirus, accessed 19 October 2021

President Nyusi announced on 23 September an easing of Covid-19 restrictions following the passing of the third wave of Covid-19 infections, allowing for the resumption of pre-school education and the opening of gyms, theatres, cinemas and museums at one-third capacity.²⁰ Nyusi also announced the reopening of places of worship for a limited number of people and beaches for recreational use until 5pm.²¹ However, on 6 October the government ordered the closing of popular beaches for 15 days due to failure to observe restrictive measures.²²

Mozambique's Covid-19 vaccination drive is progressing. The **United Kingdom (UK)**-based data access project **Our World in Data**, run by non-profit organisation **Global Change Data Lab** and the **University of Oxford**, estimates that Mozambique's health authorities had administered 3.68 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines by 8 October, with 1.77 million people (5.7% of the population) fully vaccinated.²³ Our World in Data estimates that **Madagascar** has fully vaccinated 185,000 people (0.7%), **Malawi** 519,000 (2.7%), South Africa 10.8 million (18.1%), **Tanzania** 596,000 (1%), **Zambia** 292,000 (1.6%) and **Zimbabwe** 2.48 million (16.7%).²⁴ Our World in Data has no estimates for **Eswatini**.

The easing of restrictions, decline in Covid-19 cases and the growing number of people fully vaccinated against Covid-19, as well as the successful advances against the violent insurgent groups in Cabo Delgado, are contributing to an improved business outlook in Mozambique. Following the easing of restrictions, **Ministério do Trabalho e Segurança Social** (labour and social security) minister **Margarida Talapa** announced on 11 October that more than 97% of all companies that had closed due to the impact of Covid-19 had reopened.²⁵ Business confidence is also increasing. **Standard Bank Mozambique's** latest **Purchasing Managers Index (PMI)**, published on 6 October, noted renewed improvement in business conditions in September after a decline in August.²⁶

The state budget proposal for 2022, approved by the **conselho de ministros** (council of ministers) on 14 October and due to be presented to parliament on 20 October, forecasts 2.9% economic growth in

²⁰ Xinhua, 24 Sep 2021

²¹ Xinhua, 24 Sep 2021

²² TVM, 6 Oct 2021

²³ Our World in Data, accessed 19 Oct 2021

²⁴ Our World in Data, 19 Oct 2021

²⁵ O Pais, 12 Oct 2021

²⁶ Standard Bank Mozambique, 6 Oct 2021

2022.²⁷ The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** estimates 2.5% growth in 2022.²⁸ However, the IMF economic outlook for **sub-Saharan Africa**, to be released on 21 October, predicts that public debt will rise to 133.6% in 2021 from 128.5% in 2020.²⁹ The IMF predicts global public debt to reach 97.8% in 2021 and remain at 96% until 2026.³⁰

Planner

2023 **(Mozambique)** Local elections;
 2024 **(Mozambique)** Provincial and presidential elections;
 2025 **(Mozambique)** **Area 1** LNG production expected to commence;

Chronology

18 Oct 2021 **Maputo (Mozambique)** *Bloomberg*. Sources familiar with the matter say **Credit Suisse** is nearing an agreement with the **United States** government that would resolve a criminal probe regarding its role in the \$2 billion **Mozambique** tuna bond scandal;

15 Oct 2021 **Maputo (Mozambique)** *DefenceWeb*. **United States Navy's** ship **Hershel 'Woody' Williams** arrives in **Maputo** for a scheduled port visit;

15 Oct 2021 **Maputo (Mozambique)** *World Bank*. **Mozambique** becomes the first country to receive payments from a **World Bank** trust fund for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, commonly known as **REDD+**;

14 Oct 2021 **Maputo (Mozambique)** *AFP*. **Southern African Development Community (SADC)** mission in **Mozambique** head **Mpho Molomo** says SADC forces in northern **Mozambique** will stay in the country indefinitely;

12 Oct 2021 **Maputo (Mozambique)** *Upstream*. **Mozambique, Rwanda** and **Southern African Development Community (SADC)** forces make progress in **Cabo Delgado** as two insurgency leaders are killed;

11 Oct 2021 **Maputo (Mozambique)** *The East African*. **Mozambican army** announces it has killed **Mariano Nhongo**, leader of **Mozambique National Resistance**, armed wing of main opposition party **Renamo**;

5 Oct 2021 **Cabo Delgado (Mozambique)** *Times Live*. Regional bloc **Southern African Development Community** agrees to extend the deployment of standby forces in **Cabo Delgado**;

4 Oct 2021 **Cabo Delgado (Mozambique)** *News24*. President **Filipe Nyusi** urges **Islamist** militants in northern **Cabo Delgado** province to surrender, saying **Mozambican, Rwandan** and **Southern African Development Community (SADC)** forces pushed them out of territory they had been occupying;

2 Oct 2021 **Cabo Delgado (Mozambique)** *Carta de Moçambique*. Regional bloc **Southern African Development Community (SADC)** says a local jihadist leader and 18 rebels were killed during a military strike on their base in **Cabo Delgado**;

25 Sep 2021 **Maputo (Mozambique)** *Carta de Moçambique*. **Rwanda's** President **Paul Kagame** visits **Cabo Delgado** and meets **Mozambique's** President **Filipe Nyusi**.

²⁷ Lusa, 19 Oct 2021

²⁸ Lusa, 19 Oct 2021

²⁹ Lusa, 13 Oct 2021

³⁰ Lusa, 13 Oct 2021

About Africa Risk Consulting:

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