

MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

663 19 October 2025

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This is a personal project by Dr Joseph Hanlon, with no outside funding.

"Moçambique recolonizado através da corrupção" free on <https://bit.ly/MozRecol> (Portuguese only)

In this issue

+ Escalating war; gas delays; insurgent veto?

+ Promises

+ Mozambique top of list for extreme poverty

Expanding war displaced 72,000 in Cabo Delgado in just 3 weeks, plus 40,000 in a new move into Nampula

There has been a major escalation of the Cabo Delgado insurgency in the past month, with insurgent activity in 12 Cabo Delgado districts and a major push south into Memba in Nampula province. In September there was "a sharp rise" in attacks and the total number so far this year exceed 519, "the highest number since the conflict began", according to the European Commission's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations department (DG ECHO). All 17 districts in Cabo Delgado have been affected, it says. (*ECHO Flash* 1 & 13 October)

In the north there were attacks in Palma town on 9, 10 and 11 October and in Mocimboa da Praia town on 7 and 22 September and 7 October. In Mocimboa insurgents stopped and preached in a local mosque. Roads near both towns were blocked or attacked. Both districts are part of the natural gas zone and are supposedly protected.

The resurgence of attacks in Mocimboa da Praia is causing organisations who were helping to rebuild the town to flee, according to mayor Helena Bandeira. Many local officials, including Bandeira, have fled and only visit the town. But the district administrator, Sergio Cipriano, and some of his administration, have remained in the town. There is no government funding for reconstruction, so work is carried out or funded by the Rwandan security forces, United Nations agencies, TotalEnergies, or NGOs.

But the big move starting in late September was south into Memba district, Nampula, with insurgents crossing over the Lurio river and attacking on 30 September and 3 October. At least 51 houses, a church and a primary school were burned or destroyed in the towns of Lúrio and Chipene. Islamic State media claims 260 homes and 2 churches destroyed. On 9 October, the insurgents left Memba, crossing the Lurio river back into Chiúre district of Cabo Delgado

Memba district administrator Manuel Cintura confirmed on 13 October that many people had fled or were afraid to sleep at home. He also acknowledged the presence of citizens from Memba "among the armed groups that have carried out attacks, considering the local population's historical ties to fishing communities in areas previously occupied by insurgents in the neighbouring province of Cabo Delgado."

In general there has been little response from Mozambican or Rwanda military forces. For example they only went to Mocimboa da Praia two days after the 9 October attack.

UN Migration estimates that between 22 September and 13 October, 72,321 people fled their homes in Cabo Delgado and 38,982 fled their homes in Memba, Nampula. (IOM UN Migration, Emergency Tracking Tool - Movement Alert 145 Mozambique: Cabo Delgado and Nampula attacks - 14 October 2025. Note that the text by district includes 40,000 additional displaced not on the map or in the headline https://dtm.iom.int/dtm_download_track/85546?file=1&type=node&id=57276)

Do insurgents have a "boardroom veto" on gas?

Insurgents have never attacked the Afungi gas compound, even though they could. When Palma was occupied, insurgents left contractor camps untouched (they were only looted later by Mozambican army and police).

But two recent attacks targeted gas workers at home, according to *Zitamar* (17 Oct). In Palma town on 9 October an employee of a company providing catering services to the construction industry was targeted.

An off-duty security guard, Santos Costa, was killed by insurgents on 14 October while on leave in his village on the border between Palma and Mocímboa da Praia districts. He worked for ISCO Segurança has been guarding the Mozambique LNG project since 2022. ISCO is majority-owned by Crystal Ventures, the holding party of Rwanda's ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front, through its Mozambican investment arm Macefield Ventures Mozambique. ISCO Segurança is also 30%-owned by the family of influential Cabo Delgado businessman Yacub Osman.

The civil war was triggered by the complaint the local people gain nothing from the gas, rubies or minerals. Could it be that the insurgents see a share of the resource income as part of any settlement and do not want to jeopardise their own future income? They may see delaying the gas project as their most important weapon.

This led *Engineering News* (10 October) to ask if the insurgents were using the war and control of the security situation to have, in effect, a "veto at the boardroom table."

Both major gas consortia which will use the Afungi peninsula and stopped work after the Palma occupation have delayed restarting their installation of \$40bn of liquification equipment. ExxonMobil's chief executive Darren Woods met with President Daniel Chapo on the side-lines of the UN General Assembly in New York three weeks ago and again demanded security assurances. Exxon has already said it will not start restart work until a year after Total Energies starts work. Total's chief executive Patrick Pouyanné told investors on 29 September that "everything is ready, in fact we are re-mobilising on the ground. The last piece of the decision is to officially lift force majeure," the declaration that work had stopped due an unforeseen external event. (*Financial Times* 30 Sept) This repeats earlier promises. But force majeure remains in effect, with no explanation. Press reports suggest security worries are one reason, but another is the Pouyanné is trying to squeeze more money out of Mozambique to cover the costs of the four year stoppage.

Without addressing root causes of the conflict, war could last for decades, says ISS

The civil war in Cabo Delgado has been continuing for eight years, since insurgents first occupied Mocimboa da Praia on 5 October 2017. "The primary cause of failure in combatting the insurgency is the absence of a holistic strategy that addresses the root causes of the conflict. While supported by Islamic State, the Cabo Delgado insurgency is driven largely by local factors, including social, political and economic exclusion by the central government in Maputo," writes Institute for Security Studies consultant [Borges Nhamirre in ISS Today](#) (7 October)

"The causes of Cabo Delgado's insurgency are complex and largely local, requiring a holistic approach that goes beyond military action," he writes. "If the country maintains its exclusively

military approach, the insurgency could last for decades, like al-Shabaab and Boko Haram have in East and West Africa."

The well-informed Focus Group (*Situation Report* 211015-SEC001) said "The insurgency is spread across a wide geographic area. They have been conducting simultaneous attacks on multiple fronts". Security force responses "have had a limited impact. Consequently, the insurgency's widespread presence, combined with overt aggression, highlights an increasing brazenness posing a further challenge. ... Their ability to sustain high operational intensity across such a large area likely points to a potentially sizeable number of active combatants in Northern Mozambique."

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Will promises be kept this time?

The new government of President Daniel Chapo repeated the promises of past governments. The press and public have become cynical and ask why this time will be any different.

Speaking at the anti-corruption conference on 13 October, Chapo said "preventing and combating corruption is an absolute priority for our Government and should be taken up as a national cause." Government had approved yet another new strategy to prevent and combat corruption in public administration. This time corrupt civil servants would be held accountable. Government will take "concrete actions that enable us to better understand this phenomenon."

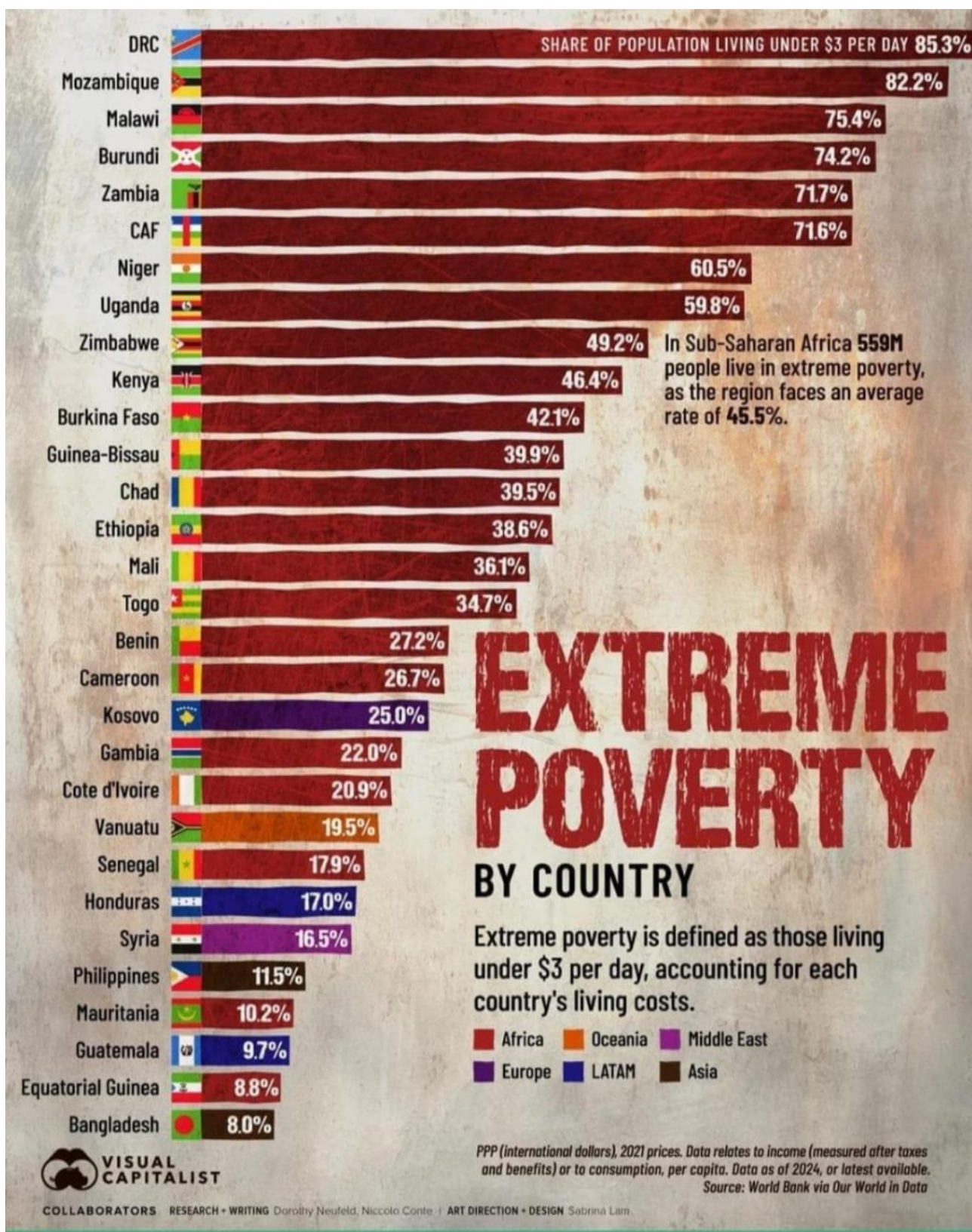
Chapo also talked of the Mozambican airline LAM, which he said was rife with corruption, theft, and embezzlement of public funds. He used a common Mozambicanism, "goatism" (*cabritismo*) coming from the saying a "a goat eats where it is tethered." This is taken to mean that the civil service "goat" takes commissions and bribes. Therefore, Chapo said, it necessary to "change the goats' pasture" so that the only pasture for LAM's goats would be their salary.

Cabo Delgado governor Valige Tauabo went to Palma on 11 October shortly after the most recent insurgent attack there. He said yet another new strategy to contain the offensives of insurgents is being developed. Speaking to residents at the local market, he said he had travelled to Palma to convey a promise of security to the population. "Let us keep our faith. The strategy for our security is being designed to give us the best possible protection."

Teachers will be paid the \$34 mn owed to them for overtime teaching last year, President Chapo said in a teachers day speech on 12 October. The state recognises the debt, and is starting phased payments. "We are paying as quickly as possible and to the extent that financial resources and our capabilities allow". But teachers are not happy about repeated promises, and overtime for this year is not being paid. So some teachers have gone on strike. Education and Culture minister Samaria Tovela warned that teachers who miss classes as a result of the strike will face severe punishment. The teachers union (A Associação Nacional dos Professores - ANAPRO) on 13 October presented a petition to the Ombud (Provedoria de Justiça) accusing the minister of "intimidating" the teachers with "threats and pressures". Union president, Isac Marrengul, Marrengule criticized the tone adopted by the minister, arguing that the strikes are the result of a loss of confidence in the government, which had promised to pay overtime in its first 100 days in office.

Mozambique second worst in world for extreme poverty, and not improving

The chart below ranks the 30 countries of the world with the highest percentage of population living in extreme poverty. DRC is worst with 85.3%, Mozambique is second worst with 82.2%, and Malawi third with 75.4%. Bangladesh, often treated as one of the poorest countries in the world, is at 8%. The percentages are of population living on an income of under \$3 per person per day. The World Bank raised its extreme poverty line from \$2.15 to \$3.00 in June of this year.



This [chart by Dorothy Neufeld and Sabrina Lam](#) was published on 8 October by Visual Capitalist. The data comes from the [World Bank Poverty and Inequality Platform](#) and [Our World in Data](#). The World Bank's new (October 2025) [Mozambique Poverty & Equity Brief](#) uses the 2022 IOF survey (Inquérito aos orçamentos familiares) to estimate 81.4% of the population below \$3 per day now. The Bank says "this rate is not expected to improve in 2026 or 2027."

Book sold out - still free on-line.

Our new book **Moçambique recolonizado através da corrupção** (*Mozambique recolonised by corruption*) sold out in Maputo in a week. More copies are being printed.

The book is in Portuguese only.

For people in Mozambique to reserve and buy a copy, contact [http://ethalebooks@gmail.com](mailto:ethalebooks@gmail.com)

The ebook version can be downloaded free from <https://bit.ly/MozReco>

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To subscribe or unsubscribe: <https://bit.ly/MozBul-sub> Past election newsletters are on <https://bit.ly/CIP-EI>
Election study collaboration: We have detailed election data from 1999 through 2014 and are inviting scholars to use this data collaboratively. <http://bit.ly/MozEIData>

Important external links

Books by Joseph Hanlon can be downloaded, free: <https://bit.ly/HanlonBooks>

Flood, cyclone and weather: weather <https://www.inam.gov.mz/>

rainfall https://www.inam.gov.mz/images/DAPT_Previsoes/Manha/Previsao_Manha.pdf

Cyclone trackers, <https://bit.ly/Reunion-cyclone>, <https://www.metoc.navy.mil/jtwc/jtwc.html>

(which uses z time which is UCT - Coordinated Universal Time) and <https://www.cyclocane.com/>

Two LSE working papers - World Bank questions its Mozambique 'success' where oligarchs brought high inequality, poverty and corruption - <https://bit.ly/Moz-LSE-208c> and **How the IMF and World Bank caused a resource curse and civil war in Mozambique** - <https://bit.ly/Moz-LSE-209>

Minimum wage & exchange rate charts, tables 1996-2022 <https://bit.ly/MozMinWage2022>

Previous editions of this newsletter: <https://bit.ly/MozNews2023> and <https://bit.ly/MozNews2022>

My Mozambique archive: <http://bit.ly/Mozamb>

Cabo Delgado

Cabo Ligado weekly report on civil war <https://www.cabolidado.com/>

Archive with reports, detailed maps, and census data <https://bit.ly/Moz-CDg>

Special reports on the war

Evolution of the war: global vs local. 27 Feb 2020 <http://bit.ly/CDelgadoOrigins>

Religion is shaping Cabo Delgado civil war. 30 April 2020 <https://bit.ly/CDelgadoReligion>

Intensifying argument over roots of war. 28 June 2020 <https://bit.ly/Moz-492>

Are the drums of war silencing any hope of peace? 26 July 2020 <http://bit.ly/Moz-496>

A history of violence presages the insurgency. 13 August 2020 <http://bit.ly/Moz-498>

Military & economic intervention. 3 Sept 2020 <https://bit.ly/CDelgadoIntervene>

Cabo-Delgado-Free-for-all. 20 Apr 2022. <http://bit.ly/Moz-593>

Mozambique heroin transit trade

English - LSE - 2018 - <http://bit.ly/Moz-heroin>

Portuguese - CIP- 2018 - <http://bit.ly/HeroinaPT>

2001 first article- *Metical* - English and Portuguese <https://bit.ly/MozHeroin2001>

Gas for development?

Gas_for_development_or_just_for_money?_2015 bit.ly/MozGasEng

Gás_para_desenvolvimento_ou_apenas_dinheiro?_2015 bit.ly/MozGasPt

Background reading

Special reports

Social protection report - 2017 Mozambique - <http://bit.ly/MozSocPro>

Special report on four poverty surveys: bit.ly/MozPoverty

\$2bn secret debt - in English

Secret debt trial (Aug-Oct 2021) press reports <https://bit.ly/Moz-secret-debt>

Kroll - Full report on \$2bn debt - <http://bit.ly/Kroll-Moz>

Kroll report summary - <http://bit.ly/Kroll-sum>

Key points of Mozambique parliament report - Nov 2016 - <http://bit.ly/MozAR-debt-En>

Following the donor-designed path to Mozambique's \$2.2 bn debt - <http://bit.ly/3WQ-hanlon>

In Portuguese:

Parliamentary Report on the Secret Debt (complete) bit.ly/MozAR-debt

2018 Constitution - <http://bit.ly/2KF588T>

Twelve books by Joseph Hanlon can be downloaded, free: <https://bit.ly/HanlonBooks>

"Moçambique recolonizado através da corrupção" (2025) <https://bit.ly/MozRecol> (Portuguese only)

Zimbabwe takes back its land (2013) <https://bit.ly/Zim-takes-land>

Bangladesh confronts climate change (2016)

Chickens and beer: A recipe for agricultural growth in Mozambique (2014) is on <https://bit.ly/Chickens-Beer>

Há Mais Bicicletas – mas há desenvolvimento? (2008)

Civil War Civil Peace (2006): <https://bit.ly/Civil-War-Civil-Peace>

Moçambique e as grandes cheias de 2000 (2001)

Mozambique and the Great Flood of 2000 (2001)
Paz Sem Benefício: Como o FMI Bloqueia a Reconstrução (1997)
Peace Without Profit: How the IMF Blocks Rebuilding (1996) <https://bit.ly/Peace-wo-Profit>
Mozambique: Who Calls the Shots (1991) <https://bit.ly/Shots-Moz>
Mozambique: The Revolution Under Fire (1984)

These are still available for sale:

Galinhas e cerveja: uma receita para o crescimento (2014) (free in English)
Just Give Money to the Poor: The Development Revolution from the Global South (2010)
Do bicycles equal development in Mozambique? (2008) (free in Portuguese)
Beggar Your Neighbours: Apartheid Power in Southern Africa (1986)

Mozambique media websites, English:

Club of Mozambique (free): <http://clubofmozambique.com/>
Zitamar (paywall): <http://zitamar.com/>

Mozambique media websites, Portuguese (all with partial paywall):

Notícias: www.jornalnoticias.co.mz
O País: www.opais.co.mz
@Verdade: <http://www.verdade.co.mz>
Carta de Moçambique <https://cartamz.com>

Mozambique think tanks and pressure groups, Portuguese:

Centro de Integridade Pública: CIP <https://cipmoz.org/>
Observatório do Meio Rural: OMR <https://omrmz.org/>
Instituto de Estudos Sociais e Económicos: IESE <https://www.iese.ac.mz/>
Centro Para Democracia e Desenvolvimento CDD <https://cddmoz.org/> (some CDD in English)
Also CDD now controls Fórum de Monitoria do Orçamento - FMO (main debt group) <http://www.fmo.org.mz>
and RMDDH - Rede Moçambicana dos Defensores dos Direitos Humanos (a human rights group).
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