

# MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

666 12 May 2026 Editor: Joseph Hanlon ( [j.hanlon@open.ac.uk](mailto:j.hanlon@open.ac.uk) )

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

**J Hanlon's new book "Moçambique recolonizado através da corrupção"**

free on <https://bit.ly/MozRecol> (Portuguese only)

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## 60 people lynched by mobs in past month - accused of using sorcery to shrink penises

At least 60 people have been killed in the past month, accused of using sorcery to shrink or steal penises. It is believed that a look or a touch or handshake is enough to do it. A person is accused, a mob forms, and the victim lynched. The panic started in Cabo Delgado on 18 April and has spread south to all provinces. More than 60 people have been killed including two teachers, a nurse, a police officer, and a municipal official. But no victims with shrunken or stolen penises have been found.

"A clinical psychologist, Ibraimo Colabo, told reporters that eight men had gone to the hospital complaining that their genitals had shrunk. But medical examination showed that there was nothing physically wrong with them. However, two of them were in a state of panic, resulting from their belief in the rumour," reported AIM (28 April)

Several hundred people in the mobs have been arrested. In Chimoio, Manica, where a teacher was beaten to death, "the individual who claimed to have his penis shrunk was taken to a police station, where it was found that his genitals were intact, proving it to be a mere rumour", AIM reported (5 May).

Indeed, Frelimo party and government officials up to President Daniel Chapo have made statements saying no genitals have been shrunk or stolen, and that it is fake news. But Frelimo is not trusted, and panic and fear are easily whipped up. (Widely reported by LUSA, AIM, Zitamar, Mediapax, television stations.)

Paul Fauvet of AIM (27 April) noted that "there is nothing new in the charges of witches stealing penises. The claim was also made during the witch hunts in medieval Europe. The notorious 15th century witch-hunting manual 'Malleus Malificarum' ('Hammer of the Witches') claimed that witches could steal penises, and even transform them into pets."

Stolen penises seem new in Mozambique but two Mozambican anthropologists have studied other phenomenon which may be related. Mozambique has repeatedly had cholera riots, in which local people think that instead of putting chlorine in water, health workers are actually putting cholera in the public water. This regularly leads to the lynching of health workers and local Frelimo officials. In 1998 the late anthropologist Carlos Serra sent out teams of UEM students to investigate. They were shocked with what they found. Poor people in many areas believed that the local elites wanted them dead. It was not that they wanted to just exploit the poor, but wanted to kill them. ([Cólera e catarse, 2003 edition with English preface](#)) In Mozambican cholera outbreaks there are still uprisings and lynching and health posts closed, because of the total distrust of local elites.

Alcinda Honwana in her 2012 book *The time of youth: work, social change, and politics in Africa* describes the prolonged period of time when African young people are "no longer children but not yet independent adults," which she called "waithood". Becoming independent adults is about being established with livelihoods and families. To be a "man" means having a job and family. The growing crisis in Africa is the lack of jobs, which means a boy cannot become a man. The Generation Z demonstrations in Mozambique November 2024 to March 2025 were about both stolen elections and about the lack of jobs and future.

Putting these two anthropological ideas together may explain what is happening. Waithood and the lack of jobs is a symbolic castration - young males are stopped from becoming real "men". The cholera riots are about the belief by the poor that elites want them dead. It is not a long step to believing that elites want poor young men castrated.

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## **Elections**

**CIP Mozambique Elections Bulletin** is published by Centro de Integridade Pública (CIP) <https://www.cipmoz.org>; <https://cipeleicoes.org/eng/cip@cipmoz.org>).

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>

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## **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](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>

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## **Cabo Delgado**

**Cabo Ligado** weekly report on civil war <https://www.caboligado.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](http://bit.ly/MozGasEng)

Gás\_para\_desenvolvimento\_ou\_apenas\_dinheiro?\_2015 [bit.ly/MozGasPt](http://bit.ly/MozGasPt)

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## Background reading

### Special reports

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

Special report on four poverty surveys: [bit.ly/MozPoverty](http://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](http://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)

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### 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](http://www.jornalnoticias.co.mz)

O País: [www.opais.co.mz](http://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).

To subscribe to all CDD publications: <http://eepurl.com/qO9l6v> (English or Portuguese).

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