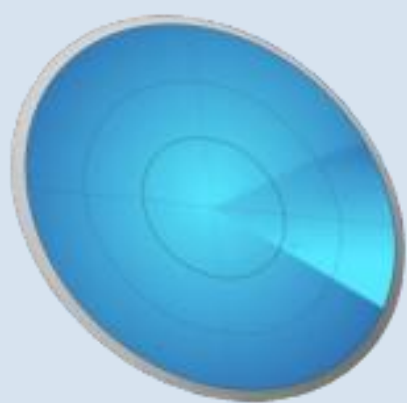


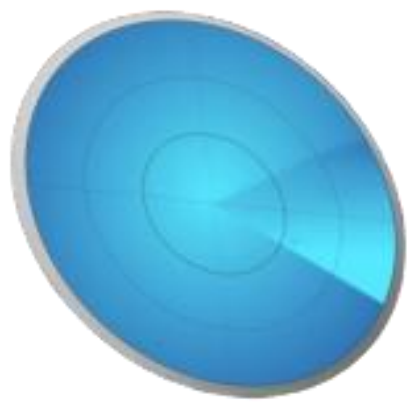


Brazilian War School (ESG)

Center for Strategic Studies
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BRAZIL'S STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

- Social Misery, Natural Gas, Rubies and Drugs: The Sources of Islamic Insurgency in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado Province

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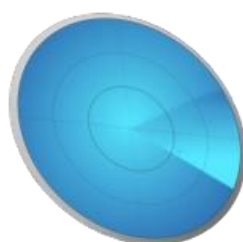
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BRAZIL'S STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Social Misery, Natural Gas, Rubies and Drugs: The Sources of Islamic Insurgency in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado Province

Author: Gilberto de Souza Vianna¹

Since the year 2017, Cabo Delgado province in northern Mozambique has suffered from terrorist attacks orchestrated by jihadists known by the name al-Shabab ("The youth" in Arabic). The al-Shabab terrorist group has sworn allegiance to the Islamic State group in 2019. Even though there are traditional Islamized communities in Southern Africa, until then there was no precedent of jihadist groups, Islamic terrorism, or presence of Islamic State-affiliated groups in Southern African Development Community (SADC)².

Al-Shabab has carried out attacks and imposed terror, such as looting villages throughout the province, causing the exodus of 700,000 people. On March 24, 2021, al-Shabab orchestrated a major attack on the village of Palma in the far north of Cabo Delgado province, home to the largest natural gas prospecting project in Africa. The humanitarian situation in the region is extremely delicate and aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic. The recent study analyzes the sources of this insurgency and establishes possible links with Brazil.

1.Meeting of trade routes and conflicts

Portugal was the pioneer European country to reach African lands, coasting its shores and building fortifications, besides negotiating with the local elites. It was the first to arrive in Africa (it began its forays in the 15th century) and was the last to leave (only in the 20th century, in mid-1974). In the year 1498, the inhabitants of the East Coast of Africa, in the northern region of Mozambique, witnessed the passage of the ships from the squadron of the Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama, which docked for fresh water in the region of the Rio dos Bons Sinais, also called the Quelimane River. The Portuguese vessels (Naus e Caravels³) were larger than those the local inhabitants were used to, as they were familiar with the vessels called "Dhow⁴", which were used by the Islamized "Swahili" people. The Swahili people were the protagonists of an intense cabotage navigation from the Indian Ocean to the coast of what is today the northern part of the state of Mozambique. Since then, the East African coast has strategically coexisted with the meeting of trade routes, sometimes sharing products, sometimes competing, not always amicably. The Swahili were seen by the Portuguese as competitors to the local trade.

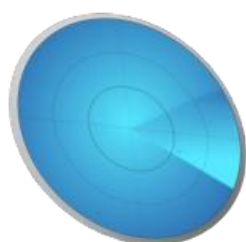
¹PhD in Social History - UFRJ. Army Reserve Officer. Associate Researcher at IESP-UERJ. Lecturer and member of the ESG Permanent Staff. Member of the Editorial Board of the Scientific Journal of ESG and member of the Editorial Board of the Scientific Journal of Fundação Osório. Founder of the Research Laboratory on Defense and Public Security - LEPDESP.

²Established on April 1, 1980, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) currently consists of 16 countries and is headquartered in Gaborone. They are: South Africa, Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Essuatini, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe - states with which Brazil maintains, to varying degrees, significant relations. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/mre/pt-br/assuntos/relacoes-bilaterais/todos-os-paises/comunidade-de-desenvolvimento-da-africa-austral-sadc>. Accessed on: April 19, 2021.

³Ready for an ocean crossing.

⁴Dhow is the generic name given to the traditional sailing ships used in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean region that have one or more masts with Latin sails.





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Therefore, geographically, Mozambique is located in the eastern portion of the South African Coast, in a strategic point for international trade, which dates back centuries to these Mozambican lands and waters being paths between West and East, mainly the millenary sea routes of products and slaves, becoming a major commercial entrepôt Middle East - Asia - Africa and, after the 16th century, also the American continent.

As liberation movements from colonial ties broke out and multiplied throughout Africa, new nations emerged. Some of these new nations bordered on former Portuguese overseas provinces⁵, generating direct consequences for Portugal, which was faced with liberation movements in its overseas provinces. Mozambican nationalism incorporated several political tendencies that had an impact on nationalist organizations: the Mozambique National African Union (MANU), the National Democratic Union of Mozambique (UDENAMO), the Independent Mozambique National African Union (UNAMI), and, later, the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO).

Tanzania's border with the Mozambican province of Cabo Delgado has become a major focus of guerrilla warfare. In Cabo Delgado, traditional Islamicized groups were one of the foci of resistance to the Portuguese colonization in the region. The capital of Cabo Delgado, today the city of "Pemba"⁷, being a port, was a strategic point for the Portuguese presence during the conflict. Portugal made a Herculean effort to fight the independence movements of its colonies, maintaining three combat fronts throughout Africa.

The end of the Portuguese Colonial Empire in Africa takes place after the events related to the Military uprising that culminated with the "Carnation Revolution", which occurred on April 25, 1974 in Portugal, and that ousted the Salazar regime, starting the process of decolonization and recognition of the so-called overseas provinces. On June 25, 1975, FRELIMO (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) proclaimed the independence of Mozambique in Maputo.

In power, the FRELIMO government opted for the socialist path, but after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1988 (Mozambique's natural ally), it was forced to approach new commercial partners in order to obtain resources and guarantee its maintenance in power, promoting a political opening.

⁵Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe.

⁶The northern coast is associated with the Mwani ethnolinguistic group, majority Islamic; the northern part of the plateau is predominantly Maconde, majority Christian; and the southern part is associated with the Macua, who constitute the majority population.

⁷The city of Pemba, under Portuguese rule, was called "Porto Amélia" at the time.





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However, in 1980, great expectations of progress were created with the discovery of natural gas in the region of the Rovuma river basin in northern Mozambique, in the province of Cabo Delgado and on the Mozambican border with Tanzania. Over the years, the large deposits of natural gas in the Rovuma Basin region have become one of the world's most important in natural gas exploration. In 2010 the largest natural gas discoveries in the last 50 years took place. The economic dimension of this event placed Mozambique among the major producers of natural gas and one of the largest suppliers of liquefied natural gas in the world, with the power to dictate world prices. The construction of the factories for the production of liquefied natural gas and the export of an initial capacity of 60 million tons/year, with the Asian market as its main destination, have stimulated the local economy.

In an area of 155,500 km² along the Rovuma River are several multinational companies that have been granted prospecting concessions by the Mozambican government. According to Mozambique's own **National Petroleum Institute** (INP) website, these companies are predominantly the American Anadarko Petroleum Corporation, the Norwegian **StatoilHydro**, the Italian **ENI** and the South African SASOL, all of which specialize in hydrocarbon exploration.

Large investments in infrastructure were made in the Cabo Delgado region and were aimed mainly at the region's airport system, estimated at US\$ 200 million for the construction of new airports in Pemba, Nacala, and Tete, as well as the modernization of Maputo International Airport. These investments aimed to serve the large flow of foreigners initially linked to the hydrocarbon industry. Some of these airports were designed and built by Odebrecht with a US\$125 million loan from BNDES made to the Mozambican government in 2013.

The city of Pemba, known for its beaches, has gained several resorts and luxury hotels with daily rates in dollars - the Kimize Hotel and Avani Resort are references in hospitality throughout SADC. Pemba had an increase in tourism to the business sector with the installation of offices of large multinational companies. A large flow of immigrants to the region began in the 1980's: Mozambicans and Africans in general in search of jobs, effectively for those who spoke English, since almost all of the service companies are foreign. This movement of foreigners and the offer of employment brought to light a social situation in Cabo Delgado: labor force is still very low qualified.

⁶Available at: <http://www.inp.gov.mz/pt/Pesquisa-Producao/Descobertas-na-Bacia-do-Rovuma/Historia-das-Descobertas-na-Bacia-Sedimentar-do-Rovuma>. Accessed on: 19 Apr. 2021. .





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All this economic movement and the arrival of foreign professionals caused an immediate rise in the cost of living for traditional populations, who were not positively affected by the progress coming from the hydrocarbon industry; on the contrary, the increase in the price of food, especially fish, a traditional economic activity in the region, affected the lives of the poorest families. The traditional fishermen, who still carry out their activity with centuries-old "Dhow" boats, have also begun to suffer from illegal competition from Chinese fishing vessels that carry out predatory fishing in the Cabo Delgado region. The Mozambican Navy has been incipient in the region.

Another side effect of the hydrocarbon industry in the Cabo Delgado region is the large flow of illegal immigrants originating from Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Nigeria. Some people enter Cabo Delgado through the border with Tanzania, an illegal entry route into Mozambique during the colonial war (1961-1974), even used by FRELIMO to receive weapons. These immigrants, initially attracted by the construction of the gas industry, started various illicit activities such as the illegal extraction of wood and precious stones, notably rubies. On the border with Tanzania, there are uncontrolled areas, allowing the ebb and flow of immigration and smuggling. However, it is important to remember that the ruby, as a precious stone, becomes a commodity of immediate liquidity, which can be used as a form of payment for various illicit activities such as the purchase of weapons and drugs in the region. Another stream of illegal immigration is the corridor and gateway that Mozambique represents for refugees from wars in search of better conditions towards South Africa, the same corridor of drug routes, especially heroin.

Notably, the hydrocarbon industry and gas extraction brought resources and some progress to the Cabo Delgado region. However, the lack of effective action by the Mozambican government in the matter of training local workers to meet the new demand for jobs and in the non-perception of the negative effects that affected the local traditional communities is noted. The lack of action by the state was crucial for the establishment and even worsening of the situation of social misery in the region and its surroundings. Many of the communities had their grazing areas cut off by roads and traditional fishing activity was severely damaged. The lack of government presence in Maputo is visible in the illegal extraction of wood, ivory, and precious stones, which does not guarantee an improvement in the quality of life; in fact, it enables a source for future conflicts.





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However, the situation of civil instability in Cabo Delgado has taken on different contours through the presence of global conflicts arising from⁹ the fight against terror, especially the progressive destabilization of the Sahel, the Great Lakes, and East Africa. The presence of a guerrilla movement linked to the "Islamic State" in the province of Cabo Delgado caused the Mozambican government to increase its efforts in the search for allies and resources. Being rich in mineral resources, diamond and ruby mines and oil, Mozambique is a point of trade and trafficking of precious stones, whose trade strengthens guerrilla and narcotics trafficking groups and organizations.

2. Souls for jihad

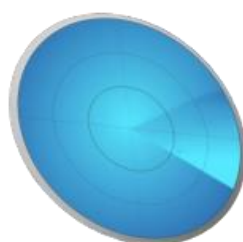
Mozambique has a rich and long cultural tradition of coexistence of different races, ethnic groups, and religions. Despite having a very significant cultural and religious diversity, religious terrorism has not been a factor in generating conflicts among the peoples of Mozambique. In Maputo, there is the Islamic Council of Mozambique (CISLAMO). In their regular meetings, they criticize the jihadist movement al-Shabab, in Cabo Delgado. Eric Morier-Genoud, a specialist on Mozambique, identifies several causes for the insurgency found in several authors:

These authors point out that Cabo Delgado is one of the poorest provinces in Mozambique and one of the areas where mega gas discoveries have created unmet expectations, as international companies are still in the process of building an LNG (natural gas) industry in the area. Other authors, such as Habibe, Fork, and Salvador, argue the opposite, namely that Islam is a key factor, if not the central factor, behind the insurgency. They posit that Muslim youth in Mozambique became radicalized under the influence of preachers from Kenya and Tanzania. Some point more broadly to Wahhabism¹⁰ and Mozambican students who studied at universities in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Sudan. A second dimension of the debate concerns assessing the external nature of the insurgency. Many authors see it as originating in Mozambique, some arguing, as we have seen, that it relates to local poverty, inequality, and marginalization. (Morier-Genoud, 2020, p 402)

The movement ends up co-opting mainly young people who have gone to study in Saudi Arabia and, initially, upon their return, try to impose in their traditional Islamized communities a radical version of Islam: Wahhabism. It is important to remember that al-Shabab means "the youth" in Arabic, so we can identify that social misery and the lack of opportunities for young people are the source of souls for the movement, but also that the movement has international support and interest beyond simple religious puritanism.

¹⁰Wahhabism, a rigid and conservative form of Islam, is the official religion of Saudi Arabia today. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/noticias/2016/01/151222_wahabismo_origens_fn. Accessed April 14, 2021.





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The Islamic communities of Cabo Delgado province, more specifically the "Ajauas" and the "Suahilis" - Islamicized peoples of about two million people spread over three countries, Mozambique, Malawi, and Tanzania - have been identified as the support of the insurgency, because even with their historical relevance in the struggle for independence the Muslim communities were forgotten for decades by the FRELIMO government.

Religious terrorism is seen by its practitioners as a transcendental act. Justified by religious authorities, it gives full sanction to the actors, who thus become instruments of the divine. The number and identity of the victims are of no importance. Religious terrorism is not unique to radical jihadists, it can occur in any form of religion. The common feature is the belief that the agent is an instrument of the divine, as a legalizer of his actions, and intolerance.

For Morier-Genoud, the attacks started from the insurgents' refusal to accept current Mozambican society, they want a new society ruled by Islamic law. According to the author, the insurgents also speak of an unestablished Swahili caliphate in East Africa - Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya.

In a quote in the German newspaper Deutsche Welle (DW), in its edition for Mozambique, the French historian Michel Cahen shows that the fertile field for the insurgency is the lack of opportunity offered to young people. As Cahen says: "This 'al-Shabab' sect in Cabo Delgado is offering a life project to young people who have no hope of social improvement. There we come back to the socio-cultural and economic issues of the conflict¹¹."

The first attack in Cabo Delgado occurred on October 5, 2017 in the town of Mocímboa da Praia. Identify the movement:

First, these men are identified as Islamists, that is, individuals who reject the secular state and wish to apply sharia completely. Thus, they did not simply follow Islamic religious principles, but wanted to establish a political order based on sharia. As Tibi says: Islam is not Islam, even though the two are connected. Islam is a religion, while Islamism is a political ideology, a form of religious politics; with the aim of establishing a political order based on sharia. Secondly, these individuals constituted a religious sect. Instead of trying to change the political order, they withdrew from it and cut themselves off from society in order to apply sharia rule to themselves. They demanded that their members not engage with the secular systems of justice, health, and education; instead, they offered these services within their mosques, thus developing a counter society; By definition, sects are newly formed religious groups that protest against elements of their home religion and society. They operate in high tension with these, denouncing them as corrupt, while claiming to represent a return to the true religion. The group we know as al-Shabaab in Mozambique meets this definition of a sect. It was an Islamic sect until 2017, when it decided to stop withdrawing from society and went on the attack to change society. (Morier-Genoud, 2020, p 397)

¹¹SILVA, Romeu da. War in Cabo Delgado: "historical error that FRELIMO cannot remedy". DW. Mozambique, 16 Apr. 2021. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/pt-002/guerra-em-cabo-delgado-erro-hist%C3%B3rico-que-a-frelimo-n%C3%A3o-consegue-remediar/a-57226829>. Accessed on: 19 Apr. 2021.





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The al-Shabaab, in 2021, in the midst of the covid-19 pandemic, now carries out strategic attacks. On April 1, 2021, it carried out a major attack on the city of Palma with the beheading of foreign gas industry workers, causing apprehension about the future of the already falling gas price increase. Notably, it is important to note that the al-Shabaab attack on the city of Palma and the beheadings to impose terror in the best style of the Islamic State occurred after the announcement of the Iran-China agreement on March 27, 2021, which affected the world price of oil and gas, with the potential to affect other oil and gas producing countries economically. According to the report in the O Globo newspaper of the same day:

China has agreed to invest \$400 billion in Iran over 25 years in exchange for a regular supply of oil to fuel its economy, under the terms of a broad economic and security agreement signed Saturday in Tehran between the foreign ministers of the two countries¹².

The German news agency DW, on April 12, 2021, in its edition for Mozambique, identified a possible attack on Pemba, capital of Cabo Delgado, by interviewing Peace and Security expert Calton Cadeado, who sees Pemba as "a target of great strategic value for the terrorists" and warns that despite the large Mozambican military presence in the capital of Cabo Delgado, a fact has become clear in recent days: "It is not enough to have a lot of force, the most important thing is to have strategic positioning and mobility. Tactical and rapid mobility to deal with the problem¹³."

3. The meeting of drug trafficking routes: where the heroin route meets the cocaine route

At this point, another factor of social imbalance in the Cabo Delgado region is the international drug traffic, which ends up permeating the Islamic insurgency, the illegal extraction of wood (and especially precious stones), the gas industries and their foreign workers, and the traditional fishermen who use the Dhow boats with the capacity to reach the Indian Ocean - and who bring heroin from Afghanistan, which remains hidden in most analyses about Cabo Delgado and Mozambique and which is relevant to compose the equation of the sad situation of the Mozambican province.

¹²CHINA signs broad agreement and will invest \$400 billion in Iran in exchange for oil. O Globo. 27 Mar. 2021. Available at: <https://oglobo.globo.com/mundo/china-assina-acordo-amplo-vai-investir-us-400-bilhoes-no-ira-em-troca-de-petroleo-24944465>. Accessed on: 2 abr. 2021.

¹³ISSUFO, Nadia. "Pemba is a target of great strategic value for terrorists". DW. Mozambique, 12 Apr 2021. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/pt-002/pemba-%C3%A9-um-alvo-de-grande-valor-estrat%C3%A9gico-para-os-terroristas/a-57174379>. Accessed on: 19 Apr. 2021.





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When it comes to drug trafficking, it is important to highlight a relevant point: Mozambique is located at the end of the Eastern route of heroin, specifically further Southeast, also known in organized crime as the "heroin route", being the cities of "Pemba" and "Beira" the centers of this route. Cabo Delgado province is strategically used as an international drug route (heroin, synthetic drugs and cocaine). Cabo Delgado, surrounded by islands, allows for cabotage navigation, and the land routes built to serve the gas industry allow land transport to flow drugs to Nampula, the distribution center for strategic destinations.

Obviously, the drug cartels have profited from the gas industry and the flow of tourism and immigration (legal or illegal), leading to an increase in the local consumption of heroin and synthetic drugs. The final cog in the wheel of cocaine consumption in Mozambique is found in the cocaine route, departing from South America, notably Brazil, seeking to reach the Asian market, and the heroin route, departing from the Indian Ocean seeking to reach Europe and North America.

If there is a large flow of illegal immigrants entering the Tanzanian border without effective control, we have to think that the drug cartels control the accesses via coastal shipping that the Indian Ocean offers in the province of Cabo Delgado. These access points have been transformed by drug cartels into depots that link the producer to the consumer. Because of the low income of the population, Mozambique is not a market for drug consumption, but it is a major junction of routes. For some observers, the analysis that heroin trafficking from Afghanistan to Europe is one of the main reasons for the conflict in Cabo Delgado is entirely feasible.

Recently, a relevant presence of the 'International Affairs Office' of the First Capital Command (PCC) in Mozambique has been observed. Gilberto Aparecido dos Santos, aka "Fuminho"¹⁵, was already managing part of the local drug and arms trade in association with local criminal organizations. His plan is to expand his control and lead crime in southern Africa in the same way he has led the organization in South America for the past ten years, which consequently gives him control over the eastern route of heroin and synthetic drugs.

Another prominent member within the command is Marcos Alberto de Almeida, aka Tuta. Considered to be the cupola of the PCC, this individual even received a salary from the Consulate of

¹⁴According to Manso and Dias, the PCC as a criminal organization is structured in departments called "sintonias", in which each one is in charge of an area of action.

ADORNO, Luís; COSTA, Flávio. Arrested in Mozambique, Fuminho planned to control trafficking in Africa. UOL, São Paulo, 14 Apr. 2020. Public Security. Available at: <https://noticias.uol.com.br/cotidiano/ultimas-noticias/2020/04/14/preso-em-mocambique-fuminho-planejava-controlar-trafico-na-africa.htm>. Accessed on: 20 Oct. 2020.





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Mozambique in Belo Horizonte¹⁶ even though he had never worked there - an activity that raises an indication of proximity between members of the PCC and illicit activities in Mozambique. The circulation of rubies in the region guarantees a means of payment with universal liquidity for drug trafficking and arms sales. The entry of rubies illegally into Brazil may be a strong indication of this activity¹⁷.

Conclusion

The Islamic insurgency in the Mozambican province of Cabo Delgado is the result of several gears that can be initially analyzed by the lack of presence of the State with social policies directed to traditional populations. These gears are added to the transformations caused by the gas industry in the Rovuma River region and radical Islamic militancy as a way to attract young people from Islamized communities who were discredited and placed in situations of poverty and vulnerability, finding in radical Islam a way to catalyze their rebellion - obviously without realizing that they end up serving international financial interests. The illegal extraction of precious stones allows for a means of payment with immediate liquidity for all kinds of illicit activities. Added to this gear, there is a lucrative drug route that crosses the province of Cabo Delgado and promotes the wealth of the local drug cartels with various ramifications - probably even with Brazil's PCC. Along with the drug trade, there is a lucrative arms trade demanded by various groups in the region, including al-Shabaab, obviously not the only one interested.

¹⁶MELLO, Ricardo; PIMENTEL, Thais. Marcola's successor at the head of the São Paulo faction received consulate salary in Belo Horizonte, says MP. TV Globo and G1 Minas. Belo Horizonte, 15 Sep. 2020. Available at: <https://g1.globo.com/mg/minas-gerais/noticia/2020/09/15/sucessor-de-marcola-na-chefia-de-facciao-paulista-recebia-salario-de-consulado-em-bh-diz-mp.ghtml>. Accessed on: 20 Oct. 2020.

¹⁷WOMAN arrested in Galeão suspected of trying to enter the country with hidden rubies and sapphires. G1Rio. Rio de Janeiro, 05 mar. 2021. Available at: <https://g1.globo.com/rj/rio-de-janeiro/noticia/2021/03/05/mulher-e-presa-no-galeao-suspeita-de-tentar-entrar-no-pais-com-rubis-e-safiras-escondidas.ghtml>. Accessed on: 19 Apr. 2021.





ENTORNO ESTRATÉGICO BRASILEIRO

News published by OMNIDEF

allAfrica – 22/05/2021

Mozambique: Millions in Urgent Need of Aid in Cabo Delgado Province

More than 1.2 million people urgently need health assistance in Cabo Delgado Province in northern Mozambique, the World Health Organization (WHO) said Friday in a statement, signaling a further burden on a region already pummeled by an insurgency. According to the WHO, some \$3.5 million is needed to provide health assistance, including emergency treatment for common illnesses and deliveries for expectant mothers.

For complete news, [CLICK HERE](#).

Deutsche Welle – 22/05/2021

Nyusi reitera que "precisa e quer apoios contra o terrorismo"

"Nós precisamos e queremos apoios, sem proclamarmos a nossa resignação neste processo de defesa da pátria e da nossa liberdade", declarou o chefe de Estado moçambicano na abertura da IV sessão do Comité Central (CC) da Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO), partido no poder no país, do qual Filipe Nyusi é também presidente. Os 250 membros do Comité Central da FRELIMO reúnem-se hoje (22.05) e domingo (23.05) no primeiro encontro desde as eleições de 2019.

For complete news, [CLICK HERE](#).

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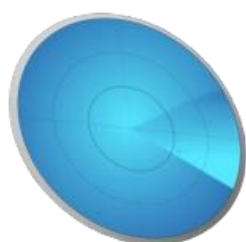
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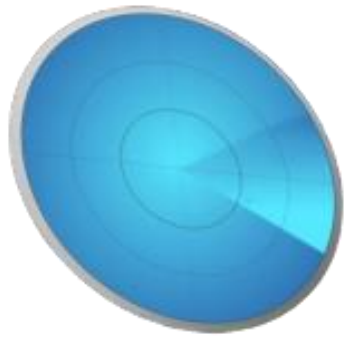
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