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Summary highlights



Insurgent tactics are shifting in Cabo Delgado, following the pattern of other insurgencies in Africa.

An attack by insurgents in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province on the town of Mocímboa da Praia in late March marked a significant escalation in the struggle between government and insurgent forces, which has been ongoing since October 2017. Insurgents occupied the town in an audacious attack, destroyed state infrastructure and used the opportunity to broadcast their Islamist message to local communities. Subsequent attacks on other towns in the province suggest that these tactics are becoming the new normal for the emboldened insurgents. Similar tactics used by al-Shabaab in Somalia in the late 2000s could help predict how the struggle for Mozambique's north may unfold.



Government neglect and corruption in Cabo Delgado have strengthened the insurgency's hand.

Cabo Delgado has long been one of Mozambique's most neglected provinces, and since the outbreak of conflict, the needs and concerns of its population continue to

play second fiddle to the economic interests of the elite. The Mozambique government's response to the conflict has been dogged by state corruption and weak state legitimacy. A desire to maintain the political and economic status quo in the north has led to a focus on quick military fixes and ham-fisted attempts to control the narrative about the war. This is playing into the insurgents' hands and failing to win the local population's support.



The Cabo Delgado insurgents may be poised to increase their control over trafficking routes.

Illicit economies are a major part of the political landscape in northern Mozambique. Organized crime has shaped the conditions which led to the emergence of the insurgency and may now exacerbate the situation. As the insurgents grow more audacious, signs are emerging that they may be taking a greater role in the illicit trafficking of heroin, rubies and gold. As the strategies of the insurgents seem to be shifting towards controlling territory in Cabo Delgado, their interests in



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and connections to the illicit economy may become more systematic.



Ethiopia's Bole International Airport has emerged as a trafficking hub for wildlife and narcotics.

Trafficking of illegal narcotics and wildlife is increasing at Ethiopia's Addis Ababa Bole International Airport. Lack of security capacity has made it difficult to confront the problem, while improvements in enforcement at other regional hub airports, such as Jomo Kenyatta in Nairobi, have disrupted trafficking and pushed criminal networks to funnel drug and wildlife shipments through Bole.



Violence aimed at lawyers threatens to undermine the criminal-justice system in South Africa.

An assassination attempt on prominent Cape Town defence lawyer William Booth is the latest in a string of violent incidents aimed at lawyers who represent gangland figures. While the reasons for the attempted hit on Booth are unknown, research shows that some of these lawyers may be pressured to become a conduit for corruption, or drawn into disputes over the control of illegal funds or the representation of rival gang members. This makes them a target for threats and violence. The fear this engenders may ultimately erode the integrity of the legal system.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

The conflict in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado region stands to have an acute humanitarian impact for the local population. Many fear that it may have a destabilizing effect on the wider region, and may deteriorate further than the current outbreak of violence, which has left many dead and an estimated 180,000 displaced.

The province boasts enormous natural wealth, from oil and gas reserves, ruby deposits along with other gems and minerals, to timber and wildlife, including thousands of elephants in the Niassa Reserve. Yet conflicts and grievances over who controls this wealth – in both licit and illicit economies – have shaped the region's politics. In the last decade, the region's trafficking economy has boomed, channelling profits into the hands of a few traffickers and politicians. Local communities have been marginalized from the vast wealth that stands to be made from the region's oil resources. In 2017, a guerrilla conflict broke out, where a militia group that became known as Al Sunnah wa Jamo (ASWJ) violently challenged the right of the state to rule.

The way the insurgents operate has shifted in recent weeks. They are better armed, better organized militarily, and have formed a link of some nature with ISCAP (Islamic State Central African Province), the central African wing of Islamic State. The insurgency has also recently changed the style of its attacks, from terrorizing locals to targeting state infrastructure and attempting to establish its own legitimacy.

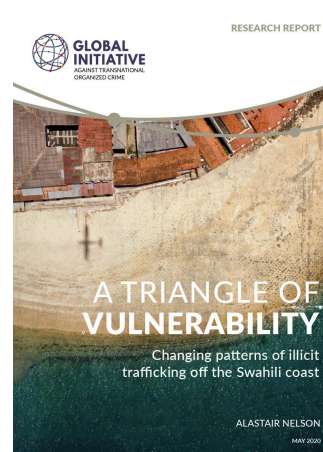
When the conflict began in 2017, many observers saw the potential for it to get entangled with the substantial illicit economy of the north. Although some assumed this convergence would be immediate and serious, Global Initiative research found that insurgents' links to the illicit economy then were largely ad hoc, and did not suggest they played a major role in trafficking networks. Their involvement, at that time, was more reflective of the fact that the illicit economy largely is the economy of the north, as a result of the failures of governance that have left people impoverished and angry in the midst of great natural-resource wealth. But recent shifts, as well as information from our networks, also suggest that the insurgency's relationship to the illicit economy is changing, and it is vital to take stock again.

This special edition of the Eastern and Southern African Risk Bulletin focuses on the Mozambique crisis. The first of three articles on the subject describes the recent shift in insurgent tactics and how comparisons may be drawn to tactics used by al-Shabaab a decade ago. The second looks at the political response to the crisis, and how this seems to have been shaped by the government's view of the region primarily through the lens of natural-resource extraction. The third story provides a unique analysis of current dynamics in the illicit economy of the region, how major trafficking networks are adjusting to the conflict and how far the insurgents may be implicated in these illicit markets. This draws on recent fieldwork in the region and inputs from people who are currently based on the ground. We believe it is important to

understand all three elements – conflict, governance and illicit economies – and how they interconnect.

This issue also provides analysis of new trends elsewhere in East and Southern Africa, by looking at the emergence of Addis Ababa's Bole airport as a transit hub for trafficking routes, and the dark implications of the attempted assassination of a prominent attorney in Cape Town.

Lastly, we encourage you to read the forthcoming Global Initiative report, 'A triangle of vulnerability: Changing patterns of illicit trafficking off the Swahili coast' for an in-depth look at how trafficking connects disparate locations across the eastern African seaboard, and the political and security risks this carries.



Insurgent tactics are shifting in Cabo Delgado, following the pattern of other insurgencies in Africa

The attack in late March by insurgents in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province on the town of Mocímboa da Praia – the site of the insurgency's initial emergence – marked a significant new trend in the conflict. Insurgent forces have begun to occupy towns and are attempting to forge a new relationship with civilian populations, escalating their rhetoric against the Mozambican state in an attempt to demonize the government and persuade communities of their own legitimacy. They also appear to be making a more aggressive bid to control territory in the region, which may significantly shift the balance of the conflict by increasing their control over key transport routes for legal and illegal commodities.

This is the latest phase in the conflict that began with attacks in October 2017, then remained as a low-intensity insurgency until mid-2019, when the frequency and geographical range of attacks expanded significantly. From the beginning of May 2019 to the end of the year, insurgents expanded their attacks to cover nine of the province's 16 districts, according to reporting from the risk analysis firm Intelyse.¹ In 2020, the insurgents have unleashed increasingly sophisticated and daring attacks, including on military sites and key transport routes.

Mocímboa da praia – the start of a new era?

Insurgents entered the coastal town of Mocímboa da Praia before dawn on 23 March 2020, some arriving overland and others by sea. They quickly closed the main roads out of the town centre and assaulted the military barracks, which had been the Mozambican security services' main garrison in the conflict zone. Within hours, security services had fled and the insurgents raised the black-and-white flag of the Islamic State, with whom they seem to have formed an alliance, over the town.²

The attack itself was audacious. Mocímboa da Praia is an important logistical hub for northern Cabo Delgado: straddling the main road between the gas projects and the provincial capital, it also boasts both a port and an airfield. That insurgents were so easily able to sweep aside government resistance and control the town is the strongest indicator to date of the Mozambican security

services' inability to contend with the insurgents' growing strength.

Mozambican president Filipe Nyusi has visited the town multiple times since the conflict began, including as recently as last year, and national police chief Bernardino Rafael declared that the government was making progress against the insurgency in a Mocímboa da Praia press conference just a week before the attack.^{3, 4} The fact that the town was also the site of the insurgency's initial emergence in October 2017 gives this new attack greater symbolic weight.

More interesting, though, is what the attackers did once they had control of the town. The insurgency's signature attack profile since the early days of the conflict has been to strike poorly defended towns and villages quickly, often by night, looting merchant stalls and burning homes on a large scale; beheading and otherwise mutilating the people they killed, possibly in relation to those who did not heed their call; and seemingly aiming to terrorize the population into fleeing. This strategy has forced tens of thousands of civilians to flee their homes; they make up a large proportion of the over 100 000 people who are now displaced in Cabo Delgado.⁵

In Mocímboa da Praia, however, the insurgents lingered, and their destruction was much more circumscribed. The attackers spent all day in the town, gathering the spoils of their attack and interacting with civilians. They captured a massive weapons cache at the military barracks – enough, one security expert estimated, to supply two battalions – and took much of the medicine from the town's hospital.⁶ They also systematically destroyed infrastructure that connects Mocímboa da Praia to the Mozambican state at large, robbing and vandalizing banks and government buildings.⁷ One video captured insurgents efficiently crippling haulage vehicles by shooting holes into petrol tankers.⁸

Civilians, however, suffered little. Few if any homes were burned, and no civilians have been reported among the dead. Insurgents told civilians to remain in their homes during the occupation, and delivered food

to children who were stuck inside. Reports emerged of insurgents distributing money looted from the banks to local residents, and one video showed residents – primarily young people – cheering the insurgents as they left the town.⁹

It is dangerous to generalize the complex relationships between local communities and the insurgents.

Communities which are perceived as supporting the insurgents may face heavy-handed crackdowns by Mozambican security forces. However, there are suggestions (such as the video from Mocímboa da Praia) that there may be support for the insurgents, particularly among young people. Overall, this was a far cry from the relationship between civilians and insurgents that was observed during previous attacks.

Occupations and counter-attacks

The Mocímboa da Praia attack was not an isolated incident. Insurgents carried out a smaller-scale attack in Quissanga just two days after leaving Mocímboa da Praia.¹⁰ Another series of attacks began on Monday 6 April, as insurgents occupied villages in the Quissanga and Muidumbe districts over the course of two days.¹¹ Reports have also emerged of insurgents moving from Quissanga to the Quirimbas archipelago by small boats on the evening of 10 April, then launching attacks on civilians the following day.¹²

Like Mocímboa da Praia, both districts are strategically important for flows of goods and people in eastern Cabo Delgado. Like Mocímboa da Praia, Quissanga (see also the

report below on illicit economies in northern Mozambique) is a waypoint for heroin trafficking and human smuggling, and a departure point for displaced people seeking refuge on Ibo Island. Muidumbe is one of the ruling Frelimo party's political bases in Cabo Delgado and borders a key crossroads on the N380, the only paved road connecting the gas projects to the provincial capital.¹³

Both the Quissanga and Muidumbe attacks became occupations, with insurgents flying their flag over government buildings. In both towns, attackers targeted state infrastructure and the private businesses that supply it, including destroying the machinery being used to repair a bridge on the N380. Civilian homes were spared (with some exceptions outside Muidumbe), and civilian casualties were low relative to the amount of interaction between insurgents and civilians. A video emerged from Muidumbe of insurgents addressing civilians (in a mix of Tanzanian coastal Kiswahili and Kimwani, a local language closely related to Swahili), claiming to be on the side of Muslims and the lower class and promising not to harm civilians or their property.¹⁴ The situation is evolving quickly, but for now it seems as though these temporary occupations are a new tactic for insurgent operations in Cabo Delgado.

Mozambican authorities have since gone on the counter-offensive, bringing in private military contractors from South Africa to boost their capacity to fight the insurgents. Light helicopter gunships opened fire on an insurgent base in Muede district on 9 April, then attacked bases in Mbau, Awassi district and



Armed insurgents pose with an Islamic State flag outside a municipal building in Quissanga in early April.

SOURCE: Image shared by jihadists on social media.

Muidumbe the following day, according to reporting in South Africa's *Daily Maverick*.¹⁵ In responding to the attack on Quirimbas, one of the South African helicopters reportedly sustained damage – possibly from enemy fire – and was forced to make an emergency landing before being destroyed by the operators. The site was later overrun by the insurgents, who released videos of their fighters celebrating around the burnt aircraft.¹⁶ The influx of South African contractors comes after the withdrawal of the Russian Wagner group, which suffered losses after insurgent ambush attacks.¹⁷

Al-shabaab – a harbinger of cabo delgado's future?

One of the defining features of the Cabo Delgado insurgency has been its elusiveness. Even today, after insurgents have joined ISCAP and their public communications have increased, analysts know little about the group's makeup, leadership or strategic vision. The new attacks do seem to suggest a shift – and an acceleration – in the group's approach. The recent history of other insurgencies on the continent offers an instructive example of the role temporary occupations play and what they might indicate for the future of Cabo Delgado.

Analysts have identified similarities between the birth of the Cabo Delgado insurgency and Boko Haram.¹⁸ As in Cabo Delgado, Boko Haram started as a local religious sect that turned into a violent Islamic insurgency, and it has recently developed relationships with an international Islamic terrorist organization, Islamic State. It started in response to weak governance and rule of law and a desire to be free of a corrupt system that was denying economic opportunity and the right to choose the way of life they believed in. However, the current tactics employed by the Cabo Delgado insurgents are more reminiscent of Somalia's al-Shabaab.

In early 2007, al-Shabaab was nearly a broken organization, staggering from battlefield defeat by Ethiopian forces and hunted by American counter-terrorism forces. By 2009, the al-Qaeda affiliate was the preeminent armed group in much of southern Somalia. In the intervening time, as the group grew in strength, one of its signature techniques was to attack weak government forces in strategically important cities and towns, hold the area for a short time, and then withdraw.¹⁹ Al-Shabaab called the practice *koormeer* (visit). As the International Crisis Group described at the time:

The Islamist fighters used these town 'visits' ... to canvass public support and win greater legitimacy and credibility ... A 'visit' was normally well choreographed, with clerics addressing public rallies and holding talks with local clan elders. Food and money was distributed to the poor. Attempts were made to settle local inter-clan disputes and tensions. Petty criminals and bandits were apprehended. Every Islamist insurgent unit travels with a 'mobile Sharia [Islamic law] court' so that criminals can be given quick trials, thus filling a void left by the [government].²⁰

The operation in Cabo Delgado is not nearly that advanced, yet the principle remains the same. The Cabo Delgado insurgency is growing, and these temporary occupations are efforts toward the goal al-Shabaab had in 2008: territorial control. For a small insurgent force that is vulnerable to drawn-out stationary battles but faces a fragmented and incapable state military, the occupations are a low-risk way to demonstrate how much control insurgents can exert over civilians in a town without having to hold the ground indefinitely. Insurgents frequently threaten to punish civilians who collaborate with the government, and the occupations show how easily they can follow through on those threats.

At the same time, the occupations provide a stage on which the insurgents can present their case to the people. The Cabo Delgado insurgents previously preferred to propagandize indirectly, by word of mouth, but now they are taking their arguments directly to civilian populations. As demonstrated in the Muidumbe video, insurgents are making religious and political arguments to civilian audiences that they have greater legitimacy to rule than the Mozambican state, saying 'we want to remove the soldiers because, for us, they are pigs.'²¹

This rhetoric may play into an existing and widespread lack of trust which communities in northern Mozambique may have in the state, and the sense that the government has done little to address communities' economic grievances. This includes the lack of local benefits from the province's vast oil and gas reserves, and the widespread knowledge that state actors have been profiteering from trafficking heroin and other illicit goods in the region. Government failure to combat corruption and crime and to improve the wellbeing of Cabo Delgado residents may have created a more receptive audience for the insurgents.

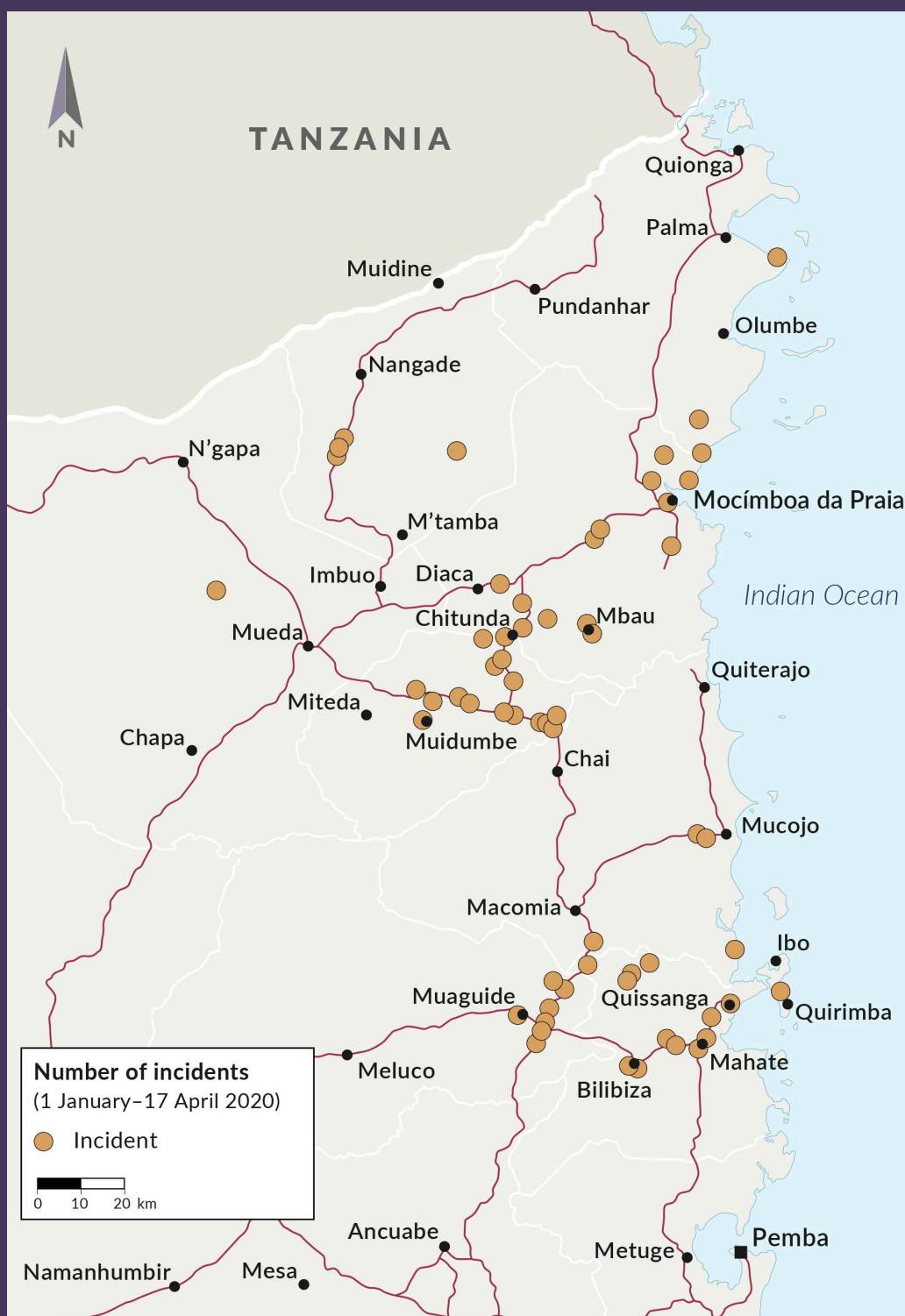


FIGURE 1 Insurgent attacks carried out between 1 January and 17 April 2020 in northern Mozambique. These include incidents where insurgents have killed and attacked civilians, as well as incidents where they have occupied villages and come into conflict with state forces.

SOURCE: The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), accessed 24 April 2020.

For al-Shabaab in Somalia, the success of those arguments was crucial while the group's power was growing but it was still militarily vulnerable. Communities that accept the legitimacy of insurgent rule are easier to control and more likely to provide the recruits and resources insurgent groups need in order to grow.

In addition to demonstrating a desire to control territory, the location of the occupations points to the desire to control Cabo Delgado's most valuable resource for anyone who lacks the technology to extract offshore natural gas: trade routes. Cabo Delgado's rugged landscape and underdeveloped infrastructure mean that there are few roads and fewer non-road methods to transport goods. Control of the N380 and other key transit routes would give the insurgents a lucrative stake in the trade, both legal and illegal, that drives the Cabo Delgado economy.

Again, this holds parallels to al-Shabaab. Recent research has shown that the long-standing resilience of the Somali organization is in part thanks to its considerable ability to diversify its income streams to include revenue from illicit markets such as guns, illegal charcoal, smuggled sugar and ivory trafficking.²²

In all, the insurgents' new approach shows that the Mozambican government's counter-insurgency effort has reached another low ebb. The temporary occupations make it difficult for Cabo Delgado civilians to know who they can trust to provide security and services. That uncertainty will likely drive further displacement and, at the margins, increase numbers of civilians willingly submitting to insurgent control. The short-term prognosis for the Mozambican state to retain control in coastal Cabo Delgado is grim.

Notes

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Government neglect and corruption in Cabo Delgado have strengthened the insurgency's hand

Cabo Delgado has long been one of Mozambique's most neglected provinces. At the northernmost extreme of the country, it is physically remote from the capital, and it was effectively cut off from the south during the country's 1977–1992 civil war. Despite an abundance of natural resources, the province is poor and illiterate. When conflict broke out in 2017, many observers pointed to Cabo Delgado's neglect by the national government, systemic corruption and economic grievances as driving the insurgency and creating fertile ground in which it could take deeper root. Yet to date, the government of Mozambique has not made serious attempts to address these concerns and restore confidence in the state. On the contrary, its response continues to be dogged by state corruption and weak legitimacy. In pursuing quick military fixes and suppressing information about the war, it is playing into the insurgents' hands and failing to win the support of the local population.

Weaknesses in the state's response

The government's current approach suggests they are relying on achieving a military solution to the conflict, but do not have faith in the ability of the Defence and Security Forces (FDS) to achieve it. (The FDS include the State Security and Intelligence Services, the police and the Mozambique Armed Defence Forces.)

To this end, they have recently engaged the services of Dyck Advisory Group, a South African private military contractor (PMC) headed up by former Zimbabwean colonel Lionel Dyck, through a contract with the Mozambican police force.¹ This followed a disastrous earlier engagement by Wagner, a Russian PMC, which withdrew after several of its fighters were ambushed and beheaded by the insurgents.²

The use of PMCs has followed a seemingly poor performance by the FDS, who have on several occasions been ambushed or overrun by insurgents, despite the insurgents' inferior resources. Many of the challenges

the army faces are systemic and long-standing, and mobilizing army recruits to fight the war in the north was always going to be challenging. The army mostly draws conscripts from the south. Fighting a conflict in Cabo Delgado puts these men in an unfamiliar landscape where most do not speak the local language, are poorly equipped and are not necessarily welcomed or trusted by the local population. Only competent military leadership could create an effective counter-insurgency force under these conditions.

The defence force has been further undermined by allegations of corruption at all levels. Senior FDS leadership are tainted by the 2016 US\$2 billion loan scandal – including President Nyusi, who was minister of defence at the time the loans were contracted.³ In addition, there have been allegations that retired senior officers and one retired security minister, with close links to the presidency, are personally involved in logistics and transport companies that have contracts to supply and move goods and troops from Maputo to Cabo Delgado for the war effort.⁴ If true, this gives them reason to prefer the war to continue at a low level with the armed forces holding key towns, rather than ending it as soon as possible. There have also been complaints that rations and danger pay have not reached the soldiers on the ground but have been pocketed by senior officers.⁵

The national government has also failed to present a consistent and coherent picture of the insurgents, switching between characterizing them as common criminals and as forces that pose an existential threat to Mozambique.⁶ Senior police officers tell the public that everything is under control, while insurgents appear to attack towns and villages with impunity.⁷ This confusion permeates the state response, creating a lack of defined purpose for the counter-insurgency effort, from the leadership of the country to conscripts on the ground.⁸ Together with poor conditions on the front lines, it is not surprising that some FDS conscripts are said to desert their posts before or at the beginning of attacks.⁹

GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL THE NARRATIVE – SHIFTING STATEMENTS AND MEDIA REPRESSION

The battle between insurgents and the state in Cabo Delgado is as much for the public narrative as for territory. Part of the Mozambican government's response to the insurgency has been to clamp down on media reporting in an attempt to project an image of control.¹⁰

Since June 2018, journalists travelling to the region have repeatedly been detained by the army or arrested by police on spurious charges.¹¹ Persecution of journalists continues, with the latest case being the apparent abduction of Mozambican radio journalist Ibraimo Mbaruco, who sent a message to colleagues on 7 April that he was 'surrounded by soldiers' and has not been seen since.¹²

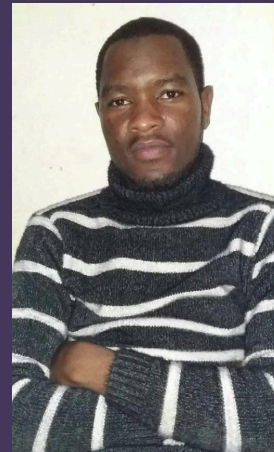
This practice has created an information vacuum around the conflict and contributed to the obscurity surrounding the insurgent group, whose aims are not widely understood.¹³ Restricting media access to the affected provinces limits coverage of other news stories – even if they are not related to insurgent attacks – such as trafficking and corruption.

The suppression of the information flow out of Cabo Delgado is an attempt to limit the exposure of state failures and abuses. It also gives fuel to conspiracy theories alleging that the insurgency is a false-flag operation instigated by Frelimo politicians, connected to a bid for greater profits from LNG (liquefied natural gas) or the illicit economy.

The government's own narratives around the conflict have shifted, and do not appear to be tethered to events on the ground. Before and shortly after Mozambique's 2019 national elections, the defence and security services released reports of successful operations against the insurgency, which reportedly enjoyed popular support.¹⁴

Later – especially after the clashes with insurgents that caused the Wagner Group, private Russian military contractors hired to help fight the insurgency, to withdraw¹⁵ – these public statements ceased.

In response to more audacious recent insurgent attacks, senior government figures have denied the significance of the conflict and the danger which the insurgents



Ibraimo Mbaruco, a journalist and news reader on Palma Community Radio, has been missing since 7 April.

SOURCE: Social media.



Mozambican police spokesperson Orlando Mudumane addresses reporters on 5 June 2019, after Islamic State had claimed its involvement in the Cabo Delgado insurgency for the first time.

© Borges Nhamire/Getty Images

pose. After the occupation of Mocímboa da Praia, defence minister Jaime Neto dismissed the idea that security forces are failing in the region.¹⁶

After the wave of attacks that followed, the general commander of the Mozambican police, Bernardino Rafael, denied that rebels controlled part of the region but euphemistically admitted that 'what do exist are areas prone to incursions by the evildoers'.¹⁷

President Nyusi's description of the insurgents throughout the conflict has been inconsistent. He called

them common criminals who must be brought to justice locally,¹⁸ then referred to them at the UN General Assembly as 'criminals committing crimes of a global character, with non-nationals involved'. He also raised the issue of 'extremist activity' in meetings with South Africa,¹⁹ and has described them as a threat to Mozambique's sovereignty.²⁰

In an example of the government downplaying the seriousness of the insurgency issue, Mozambique National Police spokesperson Orlando Mudumane

addressed reporters on 5 June 2019, after Islamic State claimed for the first time that it was involved in the Cabo Delgado insurgency, saying, 'The information is not true. The police reiterate the readiness of the security forces to combat whatever wrongdoers do.'²¹ Since then, the links between Islamic State and the Cabo Delgado insurgents have become clearer, as the extremist group has claimed more attacks and insurgents have displayed the black-and-white Islamic State flag in towns they have attacked.

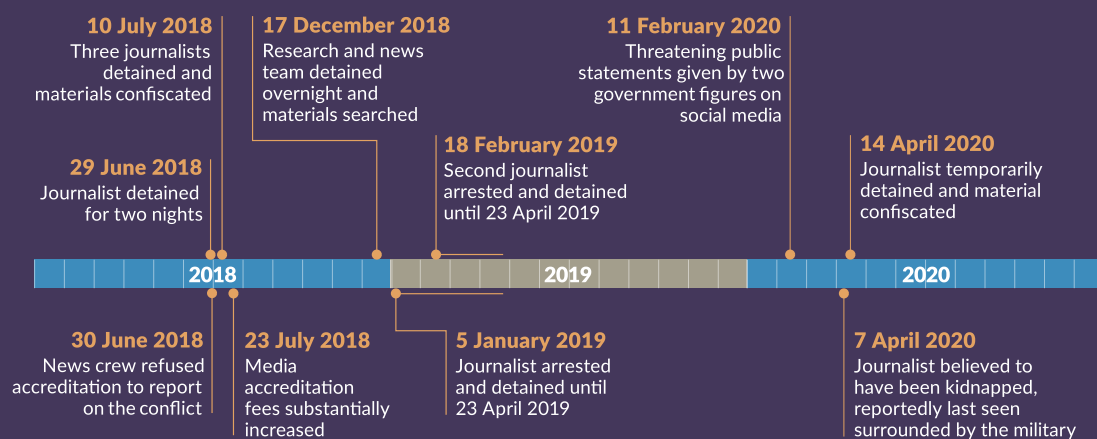


FIGURE 2 Journalists reporting on the conflict in northern Mozambique have been subjected to arbitrary detention, harassment and threats from the police, military and government figures since the insurgency began in late 2017.

SOURCE: Authors' compilation based on media reporting.

INSURGENT ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL THE NARRATIVE - COMMUNICATION ON THE GROUND AND ONLINE

Unlike the government's messaging, the insurgents' narratives have become clearer. While the attacks on infrastructure such as military bases and banks naturally offer strategic value by providing the group with funding and weapons, torching government buildings and raising the black-and-white Islamic State flag make powerful

symbolic statements that they have, at least for the duration of the attack, ousted state power.

They have begun, more overtly, to make religious and political arguments to civilian audiences that they have greater legitimacy to rule than the Mozambican state. The first video that they released appears to have been

shot during the occupation of Mocimboa da Praia on 23 March. In the video, displaying the Islamic State flag, a spokesman declared that the group's ultimate goal was to turn the region into a caliphate under sharia law.²² Signs left on a bank in Muidumbe, which was ransacked by the insurgents in a later attack, reiterated the aim to establish an 'Islamic state'.²³

In a video that circulated on 8 April, showing an attack in Muidumbe, insurgents used dehumanizing rhetoric to refer to the police and the army. A spokesman said, 'We invaded to show the current government is unfair. We are many in the bush. We aim at the armed forces we

consider pigs ... Don't collaborate with them, else when we come a third time we will kill and cut you to pieces.'²⁴

'It [the government] humiliates the poor and gives advantages to the rich. The people who are detained are from the lower classes and this is not just. Whether people like it or not, we are defending Islam.'

This rhetoric may capitalize on the deep lack of trust in the state which already exists within communities in northern Mozambique. The brutal, oppressive tactics that are reportedly being used against civilians by security forces aiming to restore order in the region may deepen this divide further and play into the insurgents' rhetoric.



Left: Two insurgents stand in front of a government building in Quissanga with an ISCAP flag. The insurgent in the red bandana calls on others to join their fight and says that the flag of the governing party is not accepted.

Right: An insurgent addresses the local population in a village in Muidumbe district in early April.

SOURCE: Video shared by jihadists on social media.

Following the string of insurgent victories (described above in the report on insurgents in Cabo Delgado), the Dyck Advisory Group appears to have been brought in to secure some quick military gains. Members of this organization have previously assisted government anti-poaching operations in the south of Mozambique, and may have local experience and training better suited to this conflict than the Russians. However, their current deployment is hampered by its contravening South Africa's Prohibition of Mercenary Activities and Regulation of Certain Activities in Countries of Armed Conflict Act of 2006.²⁵ This is causing diplomatic tensions between the two countries.²⁶ Beyond this, it is also not clear how the Dyck Advisory Group's operations, based primarily on the use of helicopter gunships, will be followed by ground troops or other measures which would make their successes sustainable.

The reliance on PMCs might not matter so much if their intervention took place in the context of a broader counter-insurgency strategy. Such a strategy, at a high level, would be based not just on military gains but also on restoring faith amongst the local population that the government can protect them and meet their needs, so they do not support the insurgents out of fear or sympathy. But instead of working on 'soft' aspects of counter-insurgency, like increasing the legitimacy of local government, Maputo has replaced civilian district administrators with military officers, and has allegedly started to arm ex-combatants as local militia to fight the insurgents.²⁷

Maputo has also taken other actions which play into the hands of the insurgency. For example, the army and police have been accused of harassing local residents,²⁸ and authorities have conducted mass arrests which may have netted dozens of innocent people, some of whom may have been tortured.²⁹

Perhaps most crucially in the long term, the government's poor communication strategy and suppression of information also allow the insurgents to shape the narrative and further undermine the government's image (see Figure 2).

Factors complicating the government's response

The escalation in the conflict comes at a particularly bad time for the government in Maputo, which is now fighting two conflicts – the second being with the breakaway Renamo Junta operating in the centre of the country. The government also has to respond to the new coronavirus

epidemic, all while struggling to regain donor trust following the secret loans scandal and facing headwinds in the negotiations over the country's debt burden and the investment schedule for the LNG project.

Many of the military's better counter-insurgency moves may also be hidden by necessity, or by the same suppression of war reporting that prevents journalists from covering the conflict. And the government has not completely ignored calls for the development of Cabo Delgado. A new Northern Integrated Development Agency has been tasked with improving economic development in the north of the country and providing economic opportunities so that youth are not recruited into the insurgency. However, this has been met by scepticism from Mozambican journalists, who claim that a similar agency in Zambesia province failed due to high-level corruption.³⁰

That said, the greatest barrier to an effective response by the government appears to be its perception of Cabo Delgado primarily as a site of resources that can be extracted for Maputo's economic gain, not as a region where local people deserve better economic opportunities and governance.

The treasure chest

The government of Mozambique appears to look at the conflict – as do many international observers – primarily in terms of its impact on access to the region's abundant natural resources.

The resource that has garnered the most attention in relation to the insurgency is LNG, which was discovered in 2010 in the Rovuma basin and has triggered intense interest from international investors. Major infrastructure development is now planned for sites slightly north and directly offshore from Mocímboa da Praia (incidentally, the town where the insurgency began). This discovery raised massive national expectations of economic transformation for the whole country, one of the world's poorest. But since the revelation of the secret loans scandal, Mozambique's economy has been volatile and growth has slowed dramatically, leaving the national budget under severe strain and triggering austerity measures in some sectors.³¹ While growth has picked up, full economic recovery and future wealth are predicated on the smooth development of the LNG projects, and it is fair to say that the hopes of millions of voters rest on the benefits they have been promised from these

investments. This clearly has an impact on the popularity of the ruling party, Frelimo, and is central to the interests of the government more broadly defined (to the extent they can be separated at all). As the insurgency threatens the onshore aspects of this development and has decreased investor confidence in the project in the north, the national government's decisions are highly focused on ensuring the LNG projects go ahead.³²

The policies (formal and informal) which have in the past secured the economic interests of the elite now play into the hands of the insurgents. For the elite figures in control of these assets, resource extraction has often relied on actions that marginalize people, such as the reported abuses on or near the Gemfields ruby mine. Villagers and artisanal miners alleged they were subjected to beatings and torture; and that their relatives were murdered by security guards and police employed by the mine in order to stop them mining, and to keep them off agricultural land that fell within the mine concession area.³³ In the illicit economy, traffickers have an interest in state systems being weak and ports being porous, which is what allowed the heroin and people-smuggling economies to flourish. The high-level corruption that allows for enormous personal profit for

senior political figures gives cover for low-level corruption and means that people live with predation at all state levels. Combined with decades of underdevelopment of the region, this is a central challenge to state legitimacy.

The focus on preserving the status quo also appears to have led to a state response to the conflict which is focused on securing the north by military means. In the process, approaches that would address economic marginalization and state corruption have been neglected. To make matters worse, the military response has been mired in setbacks, and corruption and abuses may be exacerbating problems like weak state legitimacy.

The state needs to reinvest wealth in improving conditions for the people of the region, communicate transparently and allow the media to operate, and hold its own officials accountable for their crimes – in short, up-end the current arrangements for governing Cabo Delgado. It's no small task. But if they don't, the government's own actions will remain the insurgent's greatest asset as they continue to recruit and solicit support from local residents.

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The Cabo Delgado insurgents may be poised to increase their control over trafficking routes

The illicit economy in northern Mozambique helped shape the conditions that led to the current insurgency in Cabo Delgado and may drive instability in the future. Criminal networks have become economically and politically entrenched in the region. In the aftermath of the Mozambican civil war, heroin trafficking flourished in Cabo Delgado;¹ and in the past 10 to 15 years, many other illicit markets – including timber, ivory, rubies, other gemstones, drugs and human smuggling – have boomed in the region. Many of these trades traversed Cabo Delgado en route to Pemba port, which has a reputation for corruption.²

Illicit trade in the north of the country has capitalized on and fostered corruption at all levels of government. Since 2010, the links between drug trafficking and high-ranking figures in Frelimo have been well documented.³ In 2013, an investigation by the Environmental Investigation Agency into timber trafficking in northern Mozambique identified apparent links between the traffickers and a serving Mozambican government minister as well as a former minister.⁴

The exploitation of recent natural resource finds, such as rubies around Montepuez and offshore gas in Palma, has likewise been characterized by corruption among the country's political and economic elites.⁵ The proceeds of legal and illegal markets have primarily been channelled to traffickers, well-connected business people and high-level politicians.

Local communities have suffered the negative repercussions of these developments, such as being forcibly evicted by private and public security forces to make way for projects.⁶ This toxic combination of corruption, marginalization, increasing inequality and insecure land rights has created deep distrust in the Mozambican state and left the region vulnerable to the current outbreak of violent extremism.⁷

The Cabo Delgado insurgent group began as a religious sect in 2007, as young Muslim men, frustrated by the inequality and lack of opportunity afforded by the current status quo and the breakdown in governance,⁸

turned to extremist ideology inspired by the teachings of radical Kenyan cleric Aboud Rogo, and argued for a society ruled by a stricter Islamic sharia legal code.⁹ It was only in 2017, after coming into conflict with the national Islamic Council and with the state, that they chose the path of a violent insurgency.¹⁰

The sect first established itself in or near areas where valuable resources were being found, local corruption was high and trafficking was rife:

- Mocimboa da Praia has been, and remains, a major hub for illicit trafficking, with the fishing harbour used to land heroin off dhows from the Makran Coast, and illegal migrants, ivory and timber all smuggled in and out by boat.¹¹
- Macomia has been a centre for the timber trade, in which corruption has played a major part, for more than 20 years.
- Montepuez is the site of the biggest ruby deposits in the world, discovered in 2009, where local elites have captured access to the concessions and forcibly displaced farmers and artisanal ruby miners.
- Balama has been an important centre for ivory poaching and trafficking since about 2011, and more recently a small market for gemstones and alluvial gold has developed.¹²

Global Initiative research conducted when the insurgency was in its infancy found that, at the time, the insurgent group was not systematically exploiting illicit economies for funding. Instead, its connections to criminal trafficking markets were ad hoc, reflective of the general importance of illegal and unregulated markets to livelihoods in the north.¹³ However, more recent research into the changing dynamics of the north and reports of the growing sophistication of the insurgency mean the time is ripe for re-evaluation.

Many of the criminal economies in northern Mozambique are undergoing major changes, which will affect the ways the insurgents may exploit or participate in them.¹⁴

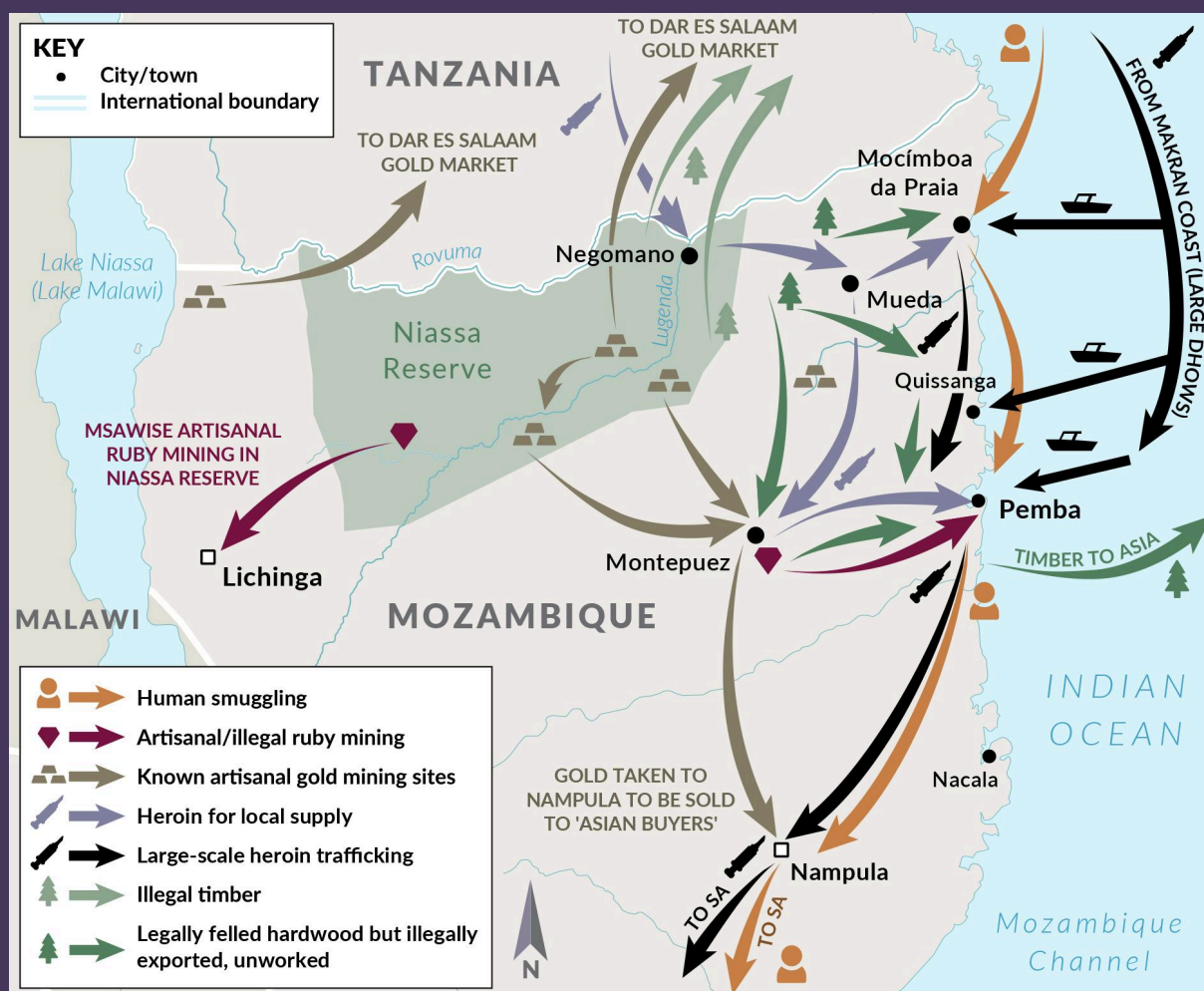


FIGURE 3 Major illicit flows passing through northern Mozambique.

SOURCE: Compilation of GI-TOC fieldwork.

The bulk heroin trade – the most lucrative drug flow through Mozambique – is ongoing, as major seizures of dhows carrying heroin off the Mozambican coast in December 2019 demonstrate.¹⁵ On 14 December, a dhow that was reported to carry over a tonne of heroin was intercepted, while a second boat was intercepted on 23 December carrying 430 kilograms of heroin and other illicit substances, and the 13 Pakistani crew members arrested.

The insurgency has caused some disruption: some of the old networks appear to have shifted their northernmost landing sites further south.¹⁶ New trafficking networks have emerged in Pemba, possibly in response to improved

law-enforcement capacity further north on the East African coast, shifting a larger volume of heroin trafficking further south.¹⁷ Heroin is landed at Mocimboa da Praia,¹⁸ at Quissanga¹⁹ and directly into the fishing harbour in Pemba, then sent south to Nampula.²⁰ There is also evidence from recent seizures in Pemba that Tanzanian networks may be receiving heroin in Cabo Delgado and shipping it north into Tanzania.²¹

There has been an increase in local heroin availability, on the streets in Pemba and amongst artisanal miners in Montepuez and in the alluvial gold mines. Heroin arriving in Montepuez is controlled by Tanzanian trafficking networks, who bring it by truck from Dar es

Salaam.²² These trucks bring commercial goods for sale in the local shops, and the heroin is packaged to order for specific retailers, hidden amongst commodities like biscuits and sugar.²³

Since the discovery of ruby deposits in Montepuez in 2009, the most lucrative mining site has been concessioned to a company controlled by the Mozambican elite, which then entered into partnership with an international mining company. Local artisanal miners have been forcibly removed from the concessioned areas.²⁴ The displaced artisanal miners illegally mine areas around the concessions and have attacked the mining concessions, sometimes overwhelming local security staff and police.²⁵

Before 2017, Thai buyers based in Montepuez bought rubies directly from the artisanal miners, for sale in Bangkok, a centre of the global gemstone market. The Mozambican police undertook a large-scale operation in February 2017 to clamp down on illegal miners and buyers around Montepuez, and 3 600 people were arrested. Illegal miners who were not Mozambican, around two-thirds of those arrested, were deported.²⁶ Several hundred foreign buyers were also deported, and with the 2016 criminalization of mining without a licence, many did not return and these established flows were disrupted.²⁷

However, the flow of 'rough' rubies (uncut gems sold by artisanal miners) continues. Recent Global Initiative fieldwork in Bangkok found that Mozambique-sourced rubies were available from Guinean networks, who were reportedly buying direct from Mozambique.²⁸ Gemstone buyers in Bangkok reported that West African networks have become increasingly important intermediaries for African gemstones sold in Bangkok.

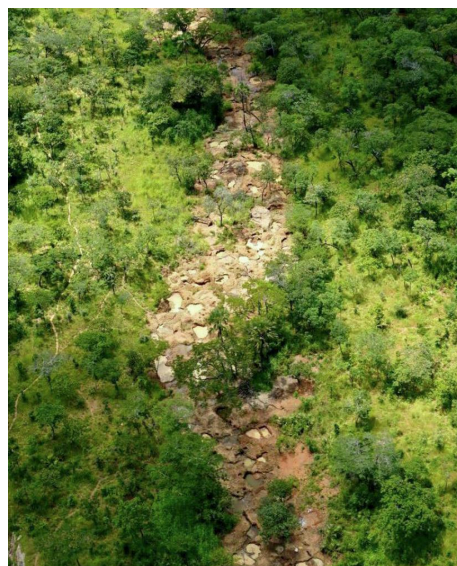
Artisanal gold-mining in northern Mozambique has accelerated in Niassa and Cabo Delgado provinces, in particular in sites within the Niassa National Reserve.²⁹ Some miners cross from Tanzania to exploit this resource. There are reports of district police being bribed to let these operations continue. Some of the raw gold is bought at the mines by foreign buyers, while some of it is moved across the border to the gold market in Dar es Salaam.³⁰ There are also local markets for the gold in Montepuez and Nampula.³¹

Mozambique has historically been an epicentre of illegal wildlife trade. In 2008–2018, Niassa National Reserve lost



The Mozambican defence and security forces intercepted a dhow reportedly carrying heroin on 14 December 2019. The crew set the boat on fire to destroy the evidence and drugs and jumped into the sea. Three died while the remaining 12 – all reportedly of Iranian nationality – were rescued and arrested.

SOURCE: Video circulated on social media following the capture of the dhow.



Alluvial gold mining site in the Niassa National Reserve.

© Niassa Carnivore Project

approximately 72% of its elephants (which had numbered at least 13 000) to poaching.³² The ivory store in Lichinga, the capital of Niassa province, was raided, and 867 pieces of ivory weighing just over 1 tonne were stolen, some later seized in Maputo and Cambodia.³³

Pemba is no longer a major trafficking route for ivory, reportedly because of a combination of international law-enforcement operations targeting key trafficking networks and a major push on ivory trafficking by individuals perceived to be incorruptible within key Mozambican law-enforcement units.³⁴ However, other animal products – such as lion teeth and claws, and pangolins and pangolin scales – are available in Pemba.³⁵

Other illicit markets exist in Pemba and Cabo Delgado. The trade in high-value hardwoods from Cabo Delgado has long been extremely lucrative. Concessions and quotas have typically been acquired in corrupt deals – initially by South Africans in the late 1990s and more recently by Chinese companies, some members of which were found to be involved in ivory trafficking.³⁶ All commercial logging of valuable hardwoods was stopped in late 2015 in an attempt to buy time to reform the sector.³⁷ However, the trade continues, as commercial traders have circumvented the ban by setting up local community logging operations which are allowed to continue exploiting this resource, and investing in protection systems and other forms of corruption to allow the trade to continue.³⁸

The northern Mozambique coast is also a major site for human smuggling, on the migrant route from the Horn of Africa to South Africa. Local dhows move down the coast from Zanzibar bringing people and other illicit products, including heroin.³⁹ Landings are made in Mocímboa da Praia and Quissanga and on the beaches near Pemba, typically on full-moon nights.

How the insurgents are linked to the illicit economy

When the religious sect that preceded the insurgency was founded in 2007, it offered youth who joined opportunities for personal development, such as training at international Islamic universities or small business loans.⁴⁰ Members became involved in the formal and informal economies – trading goods from Tanzania, supplying timber to traders operating in Macomia, and participating in the ivory trade by poaching elephants in Quirimbas National Park. Poaching there was at its height in 2009–2013.⁴¹

Since mid-2019, the group has increased both the sophistication of its strategy and the frequency of its attacks. It appears that the group is better armed, has improved training and has grown in size. While it may have acquired arms from its operations against the FDS, there are reports that FDS deserters and possibly

foreigners are being paid to provide training and that recruits are being attracted by salary offers. This suggests that their funding has grown.

The illicit economy may be playing an increasing role in this. Verifying reports of insurgent involvement in illegal markets is, however, a challenging task. Below we discuss – based on our own recent fieldwork in the region and sources in both Cabo Delgado and Niassa – the potential for the trade in timber, ivory (and other wildlife products), gold, rubies, and heroin to provide the insurgents with income. These are discussed in order from the least to most likely.

Timber and ivory

Early reports on the group suggested they were involved in the local timber and ivory trades.⁴² While this may have been true in their core areas of influence just inland from the Cabo Delgado coast, there has never been confirmation of their involvement in either poaching or ivory trafficking from Niassa Reserve, which underwent massive elephant poaching from 2009–2014 in particular.⁴³ As mentioned above, poaching rates and the transport of ivory eastwards have since plummeted.

However, the insurgency does appear to be attempting to expand its activities into Niassa. Since at least 2011–2012, there have been verifiable reports of recruitment to a fundamentalist Islamic sect within remote communities in Niassa Reserve.⁴⁴ In February 2020, a sect member originally from Niassa was back in the reserve actively recruiting poachers to join the insurgency.⁴⁵

Gold

There are also reports that insurgent groups pass through remote artisanal gold mining camps in Niassa Reserve. The regular buyers of Niassa gold are all known traffickers with no known links to the insurgency.⁴⁶ However, the recent imposition of COVID-19 restrictions in Mozambique has reduced the number of gold buyers in the reserve. There have been recent sightings from the air of new artisanal mining villages in Cabo Delgado on the western boundary of Quirimbas National Park, which is on the western edge of the insurgents' area of influence. While it was not possible to confirm any current connections between the insurgents and the gold market, this may be a risk to monitor in the future.

Rubies

Since at least 2011–2012, the group has recruited youth in and around Montepuez and has maintained a mosque and madrassa outside the town.⁴⁷ After the February 2017 operations to break up illegal mining and smuggling gangs, the Thai and other foreign networks that had previously dominated this market did not return, at least not in large numbers.⁴⁸ There have been reports that some of the insurgents have filled the vacuum left by these traders and are buying rough rubies locally and selling them to traders who can sell them internationally, particularly traders with links to Pakistan (which has a small ruby market) and Thailand (which is the central ruby market). There are also reports that some of the foreign miners expelled from the Montepuez area may have joined the insurgents.⁴⁹ This would provide a connection between the insurgents and the illegal ruby market.

Cross-border trade with Tanzania creates opportunities for insurgents to dispose of this contraband in international markets, as Dar es Salaam is a regional trading hub for both gemstones and gold.⁵⁰ Monitoring gold and gem markets to verify these reports further will be important in the coming months.

Drugs

The most reliable reports of the insurgents developing an illicit income stream are linked to the heroin trade. There is a significant range in street-level heroin prices across East and Southern Africa (see Figure 4). The range in prices in northern Mozambique – far greater than found in any other research site – reflects the variance in heroin quality available in Cabo Delgado that we also found during qualitative fieldwork in the region. We believe this spread suggests there are two distinct heroin markets: one of low-grade (and low-price) heroin smuggled from Tanzania to supply the local mining population, and another of offcuts from purer, large-scale heroin shipments smuggled through Cabo Delgado.

Law-enforcement sources report that the insurgents are establishing connections to the drug-trafficking networks that use the northern Cabo Delgado coast to land shipments from dhows.⁵¹ Since it is unlikely that they have the connections to procure heroin from suppliers in Afghanistan, they are mostly likely reaching agreement with existing trafficking networks to ‘tax’ the trade (take payment for allowing it to operate). This requires influence over key landing sites (such as Mocímboa de Praia and Quissanga) and key transport routes (such as the N380 north–south road inland from

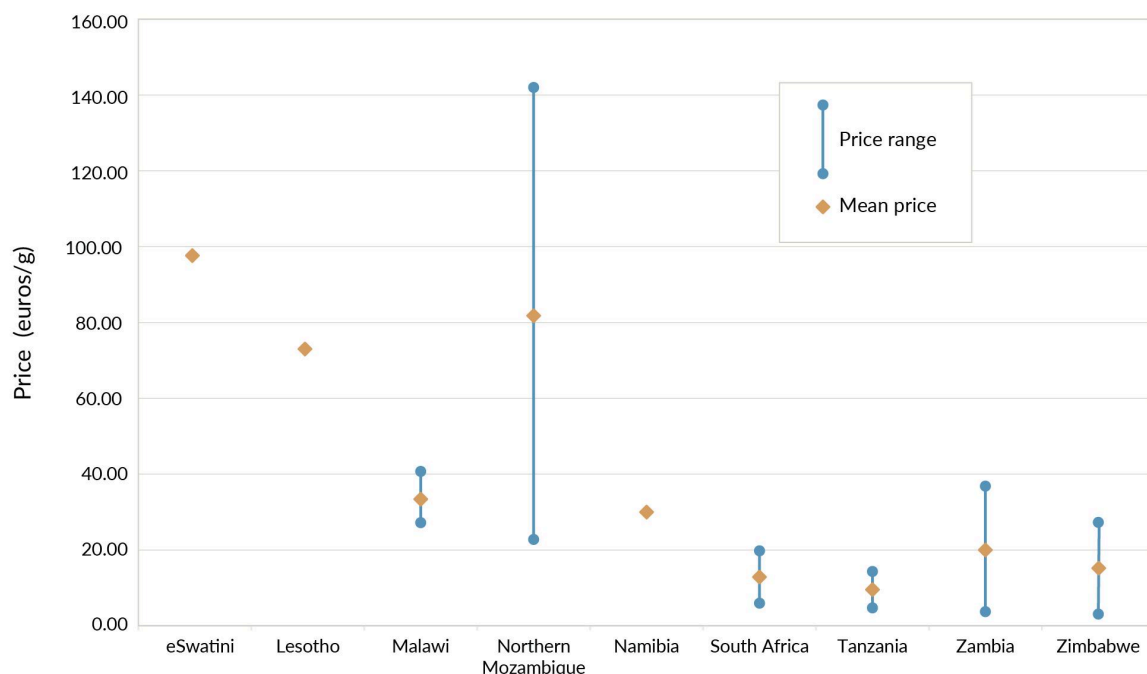


FIGURE 4 This graph draws on data from a forthcoming Global Initiative publication and demonstrates the range in street-level heroin prices across sites in East and Southern Africa.

SOURCE: Jason Eligh, *A shallow flood: The diffusion of heroin in Eastern and Southern Africa*, Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, forthcoming.

the coast, which is the only surfaced road in the region). There are anecdotal reports that known heroin traffickers in Mocímboa da Praia have not had any of their business infrastructure damaged in attacks and may have been making 'donations' to the insurgents from early on.

Changing tactics

There has been a significant recent shift in the rhetoric and style of attacks committed by the Cabo Delgado insurgents. Rather than terrorizing communities as in previous months, they are instead attacking state infrastructure and military bases. They have used their increasingly vocal media campaign to declare their intentions to create a caliphate. Analysts we interviewed suggest that part of the insurgents' aim is to re-establish control over areas historically controlled by Muslim sultanates along the Swahili coast.⁵² This historical claim would play into the caliphate narrative and the group's claim of legitimacy.

If this territorial control were achieved – along the coast from Quissanga to Palma as well as on the key inland transport corridor along the N380 road and the town of Macomia – this could vastly change the dynamics of the insurgency. Control over key sea and land routes would allow the insurgents to 'tax' licit and illicit economies in the region more systematically. While there may already be some protection of heroin trafficking and involvement in the gold and ruby trade, this could expand to include human smuggling, timber trafficking and possibly a share of the illegal wildlife trade.

The locations of recent attacks – which include coastal landing sites, transport hubs and the sites of natural resources – suggest that the insurgents may be targeting the illicit economy as a more substantial source of future revenue.⁵³ Over time, control over the illicit economy may begin to shape the actions of the group more clearly.

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Ethiopia's Bole International Airport has emerged as a trafficking hub for wildlife and narcotics

Ethiopia's Addis Ababa Bole International Airport is emerging as a new East African hotspot for the illegal trafficking of narcotics and wildlife, especially to Asian destinations. As the airport has expanded, security capacity has become a major challenge. At the same time, improvements in enforcement processes in other countries have reportedly led trafficking networks to shift their focus to air routes passing through Ethiopia.

Bole's vulnerability demonstrates the ability of traffickers of different commodities to take advantage of the same weaknesses in enforcement capacity.

Drug trafficking through bole

Since 2017, 23 African drug couriers have been arrested at Hong Kong Airport who had come from or through Bole, according to data obtained from Hong Kong Airport Customs and Excise.

In the first week of 2020, three Tanzanians and one Kenyan travelled with cocaine from Bole and were arrested at Hong Kong International Airport. A further two Tanzanians and one Brazilian national were arrested at Bole in January 2020, bound for Mumbai, and in March a South African national was arrested at Delhi airport having transited through Bole. Most couriers were arrested for possession of cocaine.

Mengisteab Beyene, the director of Narcotic Drugs Inspection at the Ethiopian Federal Police Commission, said that the airport is being targeted by traffickers from South America aiming to supply Asian and Australasian markets,¹ but the overwhelming majority of the couriers used by these groups are African nationals. Of the 23 arrested in Hong Kong since 2017, 22 were Africans, including eight Kenyans and six Tanzanians.

In September 2019, a female passenger from São Paulo was found in possession of 8 kilograms of cocaine by authorities at Bole. Lagos to Addis Ababa is also a common route. In the same month, two Nigerian nationals died en route from Lagos to Addis Ababa after cocaine pellets they had ingested opened in their bodies.

John Wotherspoon is a Catholic priest who runs a programme in Hong Kong prisons through which African nationals serving time for drug offences can potentially earn discounts on their sentences after providing information to authorities. The testimony of prisoners in Wotherspoon's programme indicates that Nigerian traffickers based in Addis Ababa are working with East Africans to recruit Kenyan and Tanzanian couriers, often using female proxies to recruit other women.

'Approximately half the number of Kenyan prisoners took drugs to Hong Kong via Addis knowingly and of their own volition, and the other half say they were tricked into coming to Addis for business opportunities, and once they arrived were either convinced to carry drugs overseas [or] forced to ingest and carry the drugs.'²

For example, Durra Kamau³ was arrested in the Hong Kong airport in 2018 carrying 644 grams of cocaine in her body in pellets, and now faces a prison sentence of up to 24 years. In a letter she wrote as a warning to others, Kamau recounted how, as a single mother trying to support a family, she was excited when a friend told her about a job opportunity in Hong Kong as a domestic worker. Kamau met the contact in a hotel in Addis Ababa and was told to swallow cocaine pellets. When she refused, she said, the man raped her and then forced her to ingest the pellets at knife point. 'I asked him to kill me instead of poisoning me. He said it isn't poison. He said I'm a fool and this is what other ladies beg to do.'

Increasing focus on bole with the decline of other regional drug trafficking hubs

'The rise in arrests of passengers from Addis on suspicion of drug trafficking corresponds with a major drop in arrests of passengers who brought drugs from Tanzania's Julius Nyerere and Kilimanjaro airports, and Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta Airport,' Wotherspoon said.

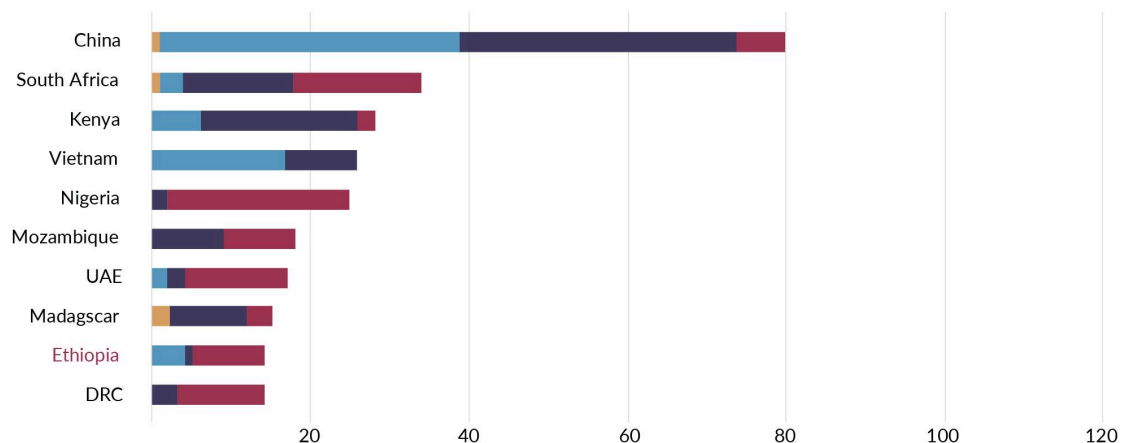
Hong Kong Customs and Excise data shows that no Tanzanians brought drugs to Hong Kong from Tanzania in 2019, whereas 55 Tanzanian couriers, flying from Tanzania, were arrested in Hong Kong airport in 2013

and 2014. Similarly, in 2019, only one Kenyan travelled with drugs from Nairobi, whereas two Kenyans brought drugs from Addis Ababa, and a further two Kenyans brought drugs from Kampala, Uganda.

According to Wotherspoon, the change in pattern is being driven by intensified airport security in Tanzania and Kenya. This was corroborated by the deputy commissioner general of Tanzania's Drug Control and

Enforcement Authority, Dr Cassian Nyandindi. He attributed the drop to arrests of drug syndicate kingpins in Tanzania – starting in 2013 under Anti- Drugs Unit head Godfrey Nzowa – and the repeal of the ineffective Drugs and Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Drugs Act (1995), which was replaced by the Drug Control and Enforcement Act (2015).⁴ This enabled the establishment of the Drug Control and Enforcement Authority (replacing the Anti-Drugs Unit), a body with

2015–2016



2018–2019

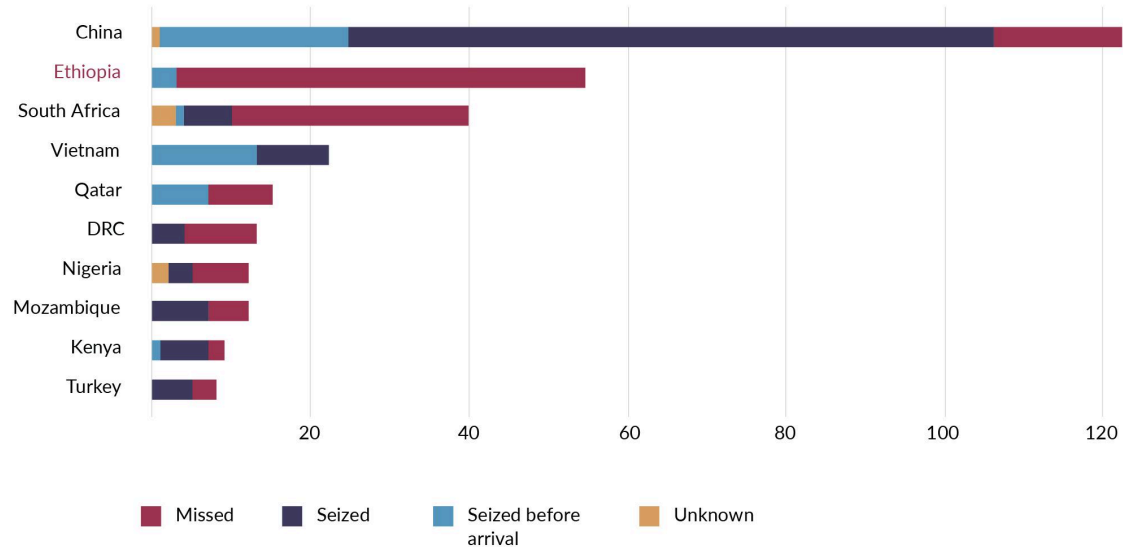


FIGURE 5 Counts of airborne wildlife-trafficking instances relating to Africa, 2015–2016 and 2018–2019, by country.

NOTE: 'Trafficking instances' include incidents of wildlife trafficking where the seizure was made within the country itself, en route to that country, or missed by authorities in that country and seized later on in the journey. The data shows that airborne wildlife trafficking through Ethiopia has risen relative to other countries since 2015, from a total count of 14 incidents in 2015–2016 to 55 in 2018–2019.

SOURCE: C4ADS Air Seizure Database, developed for the USAID Reducing Opportunities for Unlawful Transport of Endangered Species (ROUTES) Partnership and available at <http://www.routesdashboard.org>.

wide-ranging powers, including the power to bear weapons and use armed officers when arresting drug traffickers, seize bank accounts of suspected drug traffickers for a specific period, and regulate importation and illegal possession of restricted chemicals that can be used in the production of heroin, cocaine and improvised explosive devices.

'For a long time, the security at JNIA [Julius Nyerere International Airport] was poor, and traffickers exploited this,' Nyandindi said, adding that passport fraud was also a problem, 'meaning that many of those trafficking drugs under a Tanzanian passport were not in fact Tanzanian nationals.'

Parallel developments in the illegal wildlife trade

The number of illegal wildlife specimens detected in Bole has dropped considerably since 2015, according to an assessment carried out by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW).⁵ However, while seizures of wildlife products are not being made at the airport itself, Ethiopia as a whole and Bole specifically have emerged in recent years as a major transit hub for wildlife trafficking.

The ROUTES [Reducing Opportunities for Unlawful Transport of Endangered Species] Partnership, an initiative led by the US Agency for International Development to counter wildlife trafficking through air routes, collects open-source data on wildlife product seizures at airports. According to the data, between 2015 and 2016, Ethiopia ranked behind South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, Mozambique and Madagascar in terms of recorded trafficking instances associated with Africa (which includes instances where trafficked goods were seized on route to or from the country). However, by 2018–2019, Ethiopia had the highest number of trafficking instances across Africa countries.

Ethiopia also has a notably high rate of missed instances of trafficking, suggesting enforcement is less effective at

the country's airports than at other regional hubs, such as Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi. Of 55 trafficking instances recorded in the 2018/19 period, 52 shipments of trafficked goods passed through undetected, three were seized before arrival, and no seizures were recorded in Ethiopia itself.⁶

According to the IFAW analysis, elephant ivory is the most commonly trafficked illegal wildlife product, with 419 of 427 passengers arrested in Bole in 2013–2017 being in possession of elephant ivory. Of the arrested transiting passengers, 87% were bound for China, and most were Angolan or Nigerian nationals.

Mengisteab Beyene, the director of Narcotic Drugs Inspection at the Ethiopian Federal Police Commission, confirmed that Bole faces challenges.⁷ He said the airport lacks scanning technology, is understaffed and has no sniffer dogs, although a sniffer dog is being trained in Germany currently. 'Addis is a target, and like elsewhere corruption plays a part,' he said.

The IFAW assessment identified additional weaknesses, including a lack of cooperation between security agencies, delays in reporting cases to the federal police, limited forensic capability, high staff turnover and a lack of training.

The report also speculated that the redevelopment of Bole's newly expanded Terminal 2, which increased the airport's capacity from 7 million to 22 million passengers per year when it opened in January 2019, would increase the airport's attractiveness to traffickers. Accounts of both drugs and wildlife moving through the airport in the time since suggest these concerns may now be realized. The announcement by Ethiopian Airlines in January 2020 of plans to build a new \$5 billion mega-airport in Addis Ababa, which is anticipated will outgrow Bole within the next three or four years, may increase this trend further.

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Violence aimed at lawyers threatens to undermine the criminal-justice system in South Africa

Well-known Cape Town defence lawyer William Booth was shot at during an assassination attempt on 9 April by two armed suspects outside his home in Higgovale, an upmarket suburb at the base of Table Mountain. The suspects missed, and Booth survived unharmed.¹ Booth has received other death threats.²

Booth rose to prominence in Cape Town as one of the city's leading criminal lawyers, whose clients include alleged underworld figures. South African media reported that his clients Mark Lifman and André Naudé have had criminal involvement in the nightclub security industry.³

This incident is the latest in a pattern of attacks on criminal lawyers in South Africa: five other prominent Cape Town lawyers have been assassinated, or survived an

assassination attempt, since 2016 (see Figure 6). Lawyers who defend criminal figures may become vulnerable to being targeted with violence or otherwise pressured into compromising their professional integrity. The implications for the criminal-justice system may be immense.

The vulnerability of defence lawyers

Research conducted by the Global Initiative on criminal organizations in Cape Town and elsewhere has revealed that some criminal lawyers may be drawn into the gang ecosystem. While the reasons behind the hit attempt on William Booth remain unclear, other lawyers in similar positions have come into the line of fire after disputes with their criminal clients.

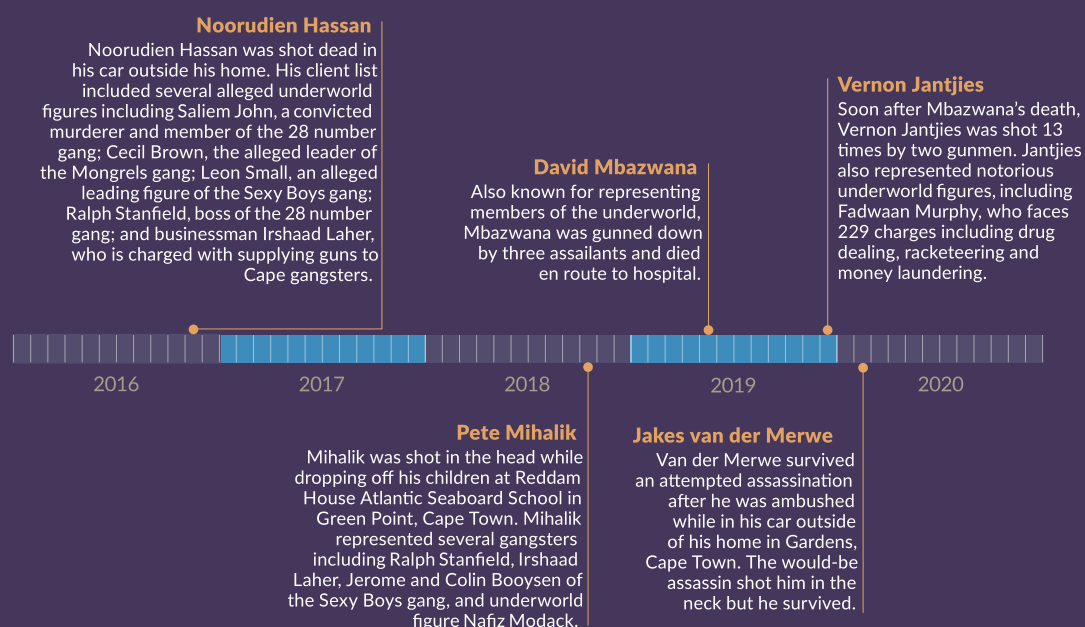


FIGURE 6 Assassinations and assassination attempts on South African defence lawyers between 2017 and 2020.

SOURCE: Compilation of media reporting.

Some lawyers become well known for representing gang members. After a successful defence of one member, they may become a trusted 'go-to' lawyer for other members of the same gang. This may be a lucrative business opportunity and help attract new clients. Some, including William Booth, may also become public figures, in part due to the notoriety of some of their clients.

Some lawyers work predominantly for gangs because gang members were their first clients who helped build their business, or because that has been a traditional focus of their family's legal practice, or because gang leaders pay them a retainer (a regular payment in exchange for being available to work as needed), which is very enticing for a young attorney starting out, or because gangsters can afford to pay lump sums up front.⁴ Most become involved slowly at first, but later are rapidly caught up in the underworld as clients recommend them to others or come to rely on them more heavily.

But this lucrative work may bring its own risks. Lawyers may come to know too much about a client's business through the steady drip of information that they receive, and thus become entangled in a web of intrigue which ultimately renders them vulnerable.

Attorneys, by the nature of their profession, have access to confidential and sensitive client information. Through their interactions with clients or other contacts, some may come to possess damning information which, if revealed, could have dire consequences. After the death of Noorudien Hassan, it was discovered that he had access (likely through a senior police official) to a highly secret police intelligence report. This report contained

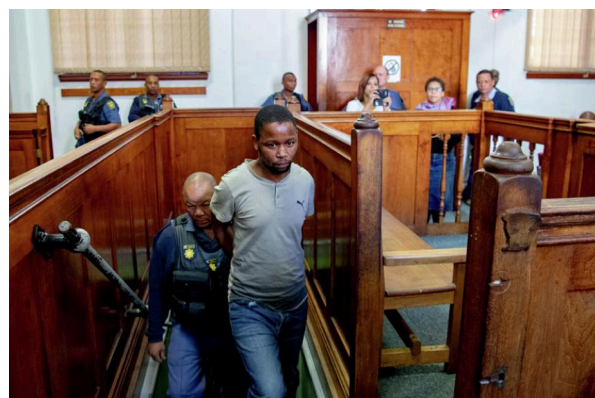
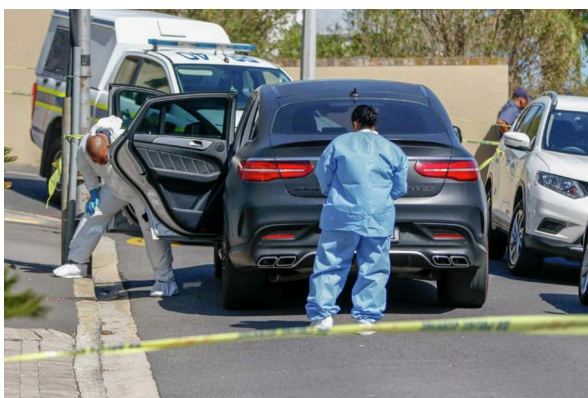
details of an informant linked to Project Impi – a major investigation into gun smuggling in South Africa which has revealed how stolen police and military firearms were passed to gangsters – that would likely have sent ripples through gang circles.⁵

Choice of clients may also anger rival criminal groups. Advocate Pete Mihalik represented Ralph Stanfield, the leader of the 28s, when he was charged with assault and intimidation. Mihalik also represented Jerome and Colin Booysen, leaders of the Sexy Boys gang, which is a direct rival of the 28s.⁶ Representing rival gangs can cause gang leaders to question an attorney's loyalty to their own gang, and disloyalty is not tolerated.

Criminal lawyers may come under pressure from their clients to cross ethical and legal lines. This may include becoming conduits for corruption – for example, by delivering bribes to police, or providing safe storage for money and valuable items – which may, ultimately, make them targets. All attorneys are required to establish trust accounts to hold money on behalf of a client. An attorney is only entitled to access these funds once he or she has provided legal services to, or incurred expenses on behalf of, the client. Often gang leaders with access to large sums of money derived from illegal activities, who do not want to draw attention to themselves, deposit it into attorneys' trust accounts under the guise that it is intended for legal services. Essentially, the attorneys then become 'gatekeepers' to the underworld fortune.⁷

The laws of the underworld

Over time, gang lawyers may be drawn into the vagaries of underworld politics. The extent to which they



Left: A forensics team examines the car in which Cape Town lawyer Pete Mihalik was shot dead in 2018 outside his son's school.
Right: Court proceedings during the Pete Mihalik murder case at the Cape Town Magistrates' Court on 29 November 2018.

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themselves are compromised, or the close connections to their clients they have built up over many years, may make it very difficult to extricate themselves from volatile situations.

Gangs, frustrated at a lawyer's unwillingness or inability to fulfil their demands, or disturbed by a lawyer's representation of a rival gang member, may respond according to the laws of the criminal world: with violence. As volatile, vengeful groups, gangs use violence as a key transactional tool and way of exerting power.

Corrosion of the legal system

The fear created by violence and threats of violence directed at lawyers may have far-reaching consequences. In a climate of fear, gang-linked lawyers may see no other option than to compromise their professional integrity, for example by bribing other members of the criminal- justice system. The effectiveness of an adversarial legal system relies heavily on the ability to trust the integrity of both defence and prosecution lawyers and their teams, and the ability of lawyers to represent their clients or the state without fear or favour. The apparent rise in violence directed at lawyers in South Africa may jeopardize this system.

Notes

- 1 *Daily Maverick*, Cape Town attorney William Booth shot at in his garage, escapes unharmed, 9 April 2020, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-04-09-cape-townattorney-william-booth-shot-at-in-his-garage-escapesunharmed/>.
- 2 Tshego Lepule, Top lawyer William Booth gets death threat, *IOL*, 29 November 2016, <https://www.iol.co.za/news/toplawyer-william-booth-gets-death-threat-2094244>.
- 3 Aron Hyman, Top attorney William Booth survives murder attempt by masked gunmen, *Times LIVE*, 9 April 2020, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2020-04-09-top-attorney-william-booth-survives-murder-attemptby-masked-gunmen/>.
- 4 Discussion with former gang lawyer, November 2019, Cape Town.
- 5 Caryn Dolley, *The Enforcers: Inside Cape Town's Deadly Nightclub Battles*, Cape Town and Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2019.
- 6 Tom Head, Pete Mihalik, *The South African*, 30 October 2018, <https://www.thesouthafrican.com/news/who-ispete-mihalik-gang-members-represented/>.
- 7 David Middleton and Michael Levi, Let sleeping lawyers lie: Organized crime, lawyers and the regulation of legal services, *British Journal of Criminology*, 55, 4 (July 2015), 647–668.

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