

FIGHTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN CABO DELGADO

SADC should extend SAMIM mandate!

- The SADC Heads of State and Government meet again this Friday (07 January) in an extraordinary summit to discuss the extension of the mandate of the State of Alert Force mission supporting Mozambique in the fight against violent extremism in Cabo Delgado. The SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) ends on January 15, approximately one week from today. CDD advocates for the continuity of the mission to ensure the creation of security conditions in northern Mozambique.





At the extraordinary summit held on October 5, 2021, in Pretoria, South Africa, the Troika of the SADC Organ of Heads of State and Government decided to extend the presence of military forces for another three months, counting from October 15, the date on which the mandate of SAMIM ended. At the time, SADC justified the extension of the mandate for another three months by highlighting the need to continue offensive operations against violent extremists with a view to consolidating security stability and creating an enabling environment for the return of displaced families, enabling humanitarian assistance operations and sustainable development.

“Today’s decision of extending the period of presence of SADC troops is simply to clar-

ify the positions that have been occupied. We need to clarify, do a full clean-up, and then consolidate it, because some cities and towns have been occupied for a year. Thus, this moment is for clarifying, cleaning and consolidating, and then the reconstruction phase will follow”¹, stated the President of the Republic of Mozambique, a time after the extraordinary summit on October 5th, 2021.

Last December, joint SADC and Mozambican troops reported intense clashes against violent extremists in the forests of Macomia. For example, prior to December 25, joint forces reported the deaths of at least 23 violent extremists, the rescue of more than five civilians, and the recovery of various weapons during an assault on an enemy base. After December 25, SAMIM and the Mozambique De-

fense Forces (FDS) raided one of the largest bases of the violent extremists in Macomia, specifically in the Administrative Post of Chai, and recovered various types of weapons.

But the last three months have not only served to “clarify, clean, and consolidate” the positions that had been occupied. Despite the significant advances that SAMIM has registered, especially in the recovery of occupied areas and destruction of enemy bases, attacks are still registered in Cabo Delgado, especially in the district of Macomia. Are being reported attacks weekly in several villages in the district of Macomia, with human victims.

In fact, on December 20 a soldier from the 5th South African Special Forces Regiment died in an ambush near Chai, in Macomia. Identified by the name of Tebogo Radebe, the

¹ <https://cddmoz.org/extensao-da-missao-da-sadc-abre-boas-perspectivas-para-a-consolidacao-da-seguranca-e-assistencia-humanitaria-2/>

31-year-old soldier was the first of the South African contingent deployed to Cabo Delgado to lose his life in combat. Since becoming operational under the command of South African Major General Xolani Mankayi, SAMIM has already recorded military casualties from Botswana, Tanzania and South Africa.

Furthermore, violent extremists tend to move into Niassa, a province bordering Cabo Delgado. In November 2021, authorities reported that at least 100 young men had been kidnapped by a group of unidentified armed men during an attack on the town of Naulala, about 60 kilometers from the town of Mecula district, Niassa province. In addition to kidnapping young people to an unknown destination, the group set fire to residences and commercial establishments, looted food products and medicines at the local health center.

Mecula is part of the Niassa Special Reserve and is on the border with Tanzania (across the Rovuma River) and on the border with Mueda, one of the districts of Cabo Delgado province where violent extremism is rife. The attack on Naulala was the first outside Cabo Delgado since the arrival of troops from Rwanda (July) and SAMIM (August) to help the FDS in the fight against violent extremism.

The conflict in Cabo Delgado broke out in October 2017 and in the last four years has expanded to all districts in the north of the province, causing three thousand deaths, forced displacement of about 800,000 people, in addition to the destruction of public and private infrastructure (including thousands of homes) and disruption of major natural gas investments from the Rovuma Basin.

Therefore, CDD argues that the Troika of the SADC Body of Heads of State and Government should extend, for the second time, the mandate of SAMIM to ensure the creation of security conditions in Northern Mozambique. It has been more than proven that Mozambican forces are not capable of containing the expansion of violent extremism in Niassa or of ensuring security in areas currently controlled by SADC troops.

When it was launched on August 9, the SADC Force consisted of a staff of 757, including combat troops, support and administrative staff, and various military equipment, such as transport and reconnaissance aircraft, combat helicopters, a maritime patrol frigate, and armoured vehicles for the ground forces. South Africa, the largest economic power in the region, planned to send the largest contingent: 1,495 troops from various specialties (land, naval, and air forces, including intelligence and logistics personnel), but by the time the mission was officially launched in Pemba, it had only deployed 270 men.



In addition to South Africa, four countries in the region have deployed troops to Mozambique, namely Tanzania, Botswana, Lesotho, and Angola. As of August 9, Tanzania and Botswana had deployed contingents of more than 200 troops each; Lesotho, a small state in the region, had sent 70 army personnel; and Angola had sent 16 troops for airlift,


force command and air control, including the IL-761 Strategic Air Projection aircraft. The Tanzanian contingent includes experts, administrative staff, military field hospital, and ground and naval fighters. Each state that has deployed military staff to Cabo Delgado is responsible for their logistical and operational expenses.



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