



## Attack in Ancabue puts Pemba on alert and threatens to worsen the humanitarian crisis in Cabo Delgado

- It is the first attack in Ancuabe and has already sounded alarms about the expansion of the conflict to the south of Cabo Delgado. The incursion of violent extremists happened less than 100 kilometers from Pemba, so the provincial capital is on alert. Ancuabe is the district that received the highest number of displaced people, after Metuge. The attack last Sunday, June 5, may worsen the humanitarian crisis.





Two days after the President of the Republic claimed “encouraging results”<sup>1</sup> in the fight against violent extremism in Cabo Delgado, the insurgents launched an attack in Ancuabe, a district less than 100 kilometers from Pemba. It is the first major attack since Rwandan and SADC foreign troops arrived in Mozambique almost a year ago, and the closest to Pemba, the capital of Cabo Delgado.

Nanduli was the village targeted, and is about 30 kilometers from “Silva Macua”, at the crossroads between National Road No. 1 (EN1) and National Road No. 380 (EN380). The press reported that, in addition to burning houses, at least four people were killed and an unspecified number of people kidnapped by the violent extremists<sup>2</sup>.

The attack raised alarms about the expansion of violent extremism to the southern part of Cabo Delgado. Ancuabe borders the district of Meluco to the north; the district of Chiúre to the south; the districts of Quissanga and Metuge to the east; and the district of Montepuez to the west. The district has a geostrategic im-

portance: it is where the EN380, the main road linking the central and northern districts of Cabo Delgado, connects with the EN1, Mozambique’s main road. A major insurgent offensive in this area could make the road connection with the central and northern districts of Cabo Delgado unviable.

Ancuabe is one of the districts in the south of the province which has received foreign investment over the last five years. One of them is the graphite exploration project, which has been operated since 2017 by GK Ancabue Graphite Mine, a subsidiary of the German company AMG Graphit Kropfmuehl GmbH<sup>3</sup>. The graphite mine represents an investment of 12 million euros and is located a few dozen kilometers from Nanduli, the neighbourhood where the attack took place on Sunday afternoon, June 5. But the biggest investment made in Ancuabe is the Metoro Solar Power Plant, a clean energy generation project valued at USD 56 million. With a capacity to generate 41MWp, the Metoro Solar Plant was inaugurated in April this year and is expected to benefit 140,000 people<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.opais.co.mz/nyusi-assegura-que-ha-bons-resultados-no-combate-ao-terrorismo-no-pais/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cartamz.com/~cartamz/index.php/politica/item/10893-ataque-a-nanduli-em-ancuabe-causou-quatro-mortos>

<sup>3</sup> <https://mozambiqueiningjournal.com/gk-ancuabe-graphite-mine-inicia-extracao-e-processamento-de-grafite-em-mocambique/?lang=pt-pt>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cartamz.com/~cartamz/index.php/empresas-marcas-e-pessoas/item/10335-inaugurada-a-central-solar-de-metoro-no-distrito-de-ancuabe-em-cabo-delgado>



Besides foreign investment, Ancuabe is one of the districts that received the highest number of displaced people in Cabo Delgado. Data from the Cabo Delgado Reconstruction Plan (PRCD) show that by August 2021, 15,556 displaced families had arrived in Ancuabe. A figure that places this district as the second with the highest number of displaced people, after Metuge, which in August 2021 counted 34,484 displaced families<sup>5</sup>. Two resettlement centres for displaced people were opened in Ancuabe, namely the Marocane centre and the Nankumi centre.

The displaced families already faced adaptation difficulties in the areas of definitive resettlement, since they left coastal villages where the main activity was fishing and are now in the interior of Cabo Delgado where subsistence agriculture predominates. This has increased their dependence on emergency humanitarian assistance, in a context where the Famine Early Warning Network (Fews Network) issued a high risk of famine alert last May in northern Mozambique if additional funding to the World Food

Programme (WFP) is not channelled soon<sup>6</sup>.

Last Sunday's attack may worsen the humanitarian situation in Ancuabe, as the feeling of insecurity is forcing the displacement of hundreds of families, including those who already had displaced status. In addition to seeking refuge in other areas within the district, some families have travelled as far as Pemba, the capital of Cabo Delgado. Images from an amateur video shared on social media showed a bus crowded with people fleeing from Ancuabe to Pemba on Sunday night. Other families carrying children were on foot to various destinations, laden with the few possessions they managed to take from their homes.

After a long period of relative stability, violent extremists again disturbed Cabo Delgado, launching new attacks against several villages in the districts of Macomia and Nangade. While attacks were previously carried out with the aim of stealing foodstuffs mainly from fields and homes, reports in recent weeks show that violent extremists have resumed the beheading of

<sup>5</sup> <https://adin.gov.mz/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/PRCD-Plano-de-Reconstrucao-de-Cabo-Delgado.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://cddmoz.org/alerta-de-fome-em-cabo-delgado-governo-deve-encontrar-formas-alternativas-de-garantir-alimentacao-as-familias-deslocadas-2/>



civilians. At least 10 people were beheaded and others abducted in several attacks, mainly in Macomia and Nangade<sup>7</sup>.

The upsurge in attacks has led consultancy Eurasia to consider it unlikely that oil companies, specifically the French TotalEnergies which was forced to leave Palma in April 2021, will resume work in Cabo Delgado in the next 12 months due to persistent insecurity and reorganisation by violent extremists. “The potential for Islamic State to provide funding and resources to the insurgents and the possible arrival of reinforcements from Tanzania will likely strengthen the insurgency, making the resumption of the liquefied natural gas exploration project in the next 12 years unlikely”<sup>8</sup>.

Meanwhile, this week Africa Intelligence reported that TotalEnergies is preparing to bring back the first contractors to Afungi, the site where the Mozambique LNG project’s natural gas liquification plant will be built . CDD has learnt from sources on the ground that some companies have already started.



<sup>7</sup> <https://www.voaportugues.com/a/cabo-delgado-dez-pessoas-decapitadas-e-outras-raptadas-numa-s%C3%A9rie-de-ataques-de-insurgentes/6586830.html>


<sup>8</sup> <https://observador.pt/2022/05/23/reorganizacao-dos-terroristas-torna-improvavel-regresso-das-petroliferas-ate-2023-em-mocambique/>



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