

One year after the arrival of Rwandan and SADC troops, violent extremism remains far from defeated

- After a long narrative against the presence of “foreign boots” in Cabo Delgado, the Government changed its approach and opened itself to the entry of external troops. The brutal attack on the town of Palma in March 2021 was instrumental in the change of approach. In July the deployment of Rwandan troops began, and three months later there were already more than two thousand men in Cabo Delgado. The political agreement that made the sending of Rwandan troops possible was not approved by Parliament and the costs for Mozambique remain unknown.



First attack in Mocimboa da Praia after the arrival of Rwandans Credits ZITAMAR NEWS

- After several postponements, the SADC troops also landed in Cabo Delgado in late July and early August 2021. The total number of troops from the regional bloc is below the nearly three thousand recommended by the SADC technical assessment mission. Eight countries are contributing men and material resources, with South Africa having the largest contingent. The SADC mission ended on July 15, but was provisionally extended until August, when the ordinary summit of Heads of State and Government will make a final decision.
- One year after the arrival of foreign troops, violent extremism in Cabo Delgado is difficult to be defeated. While it is true that all district villages, administrative posts and localities that were controlled by violent extremists have been recovered, it is also true that in these places there are still no conditions for the safe return of displaced populations. The enemy continues to launch sporadic attacks and behead civilians, especially in Macomia and Nangade; and has expanded the conflict to the south of Cabo Delgado, worsening the humanitarian crisis and threatening several extractive industry projects concentrated in the Ancuabe, Balama, and Montepuez axis.

The continuity or not of the SADC Mission (SAMIM) to combat violent extremism in Cabo Delgado will be decided at the ordinary summit of the regional organization to be held on 16 and 17 August in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The mandate of the SADC troops in Mozambique ended last Friday, July 15, but was provisionally extended until August, when the ordinary summit of the heads of state and government of the region is scheduled to take place¹.

The provisional extension of SAMIM's mandate was decided at this week's extraordinary summit, which brought together, virtually, the heads of state of Mozambique (Filipe Nyusi), Malawi (Lazarus Chakwera), DRC (Felix Tshisekedi) and South Africa (Cyril Ramaphosa). Officially, SAMIM's mandate began on July 15, 2021 and was to last three months, but was successively renewed until it completed one year last Friday.

Despite counting from July 15, 2021, the deployment of regional troops to Cabo Delgado only began in late July and early August 2021.² In fact, the mission was officially launched on August 9, but it took almost a month to start the military offensive against violent extremists in Cabo Delgado³.

At the time of launch, the SADC mission was composed of 757 personnel, including combat troops, support and administrative personnel, as well as various military equipment, such as transport and reconnaissance aircraft, combat helicopters, a maritime patrol frigate and armored vehicles for the



¹ <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/samim-mandate-temporarily-extended/>

² <https://cddmoz.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Ruandeses-ja-combatem-SADC-chega-a-conta-gotas.pdf>

³ <https://cddmoz.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/COMBATE-AO-EXTREMISMO-VIOLENTO-EM-CABO-DELGADO -Dez-dias-depois-do-lancamento-oficial-da-missao-tropas-da-SADC-ainda-nao-comecaram-a-combater-1.pdf>

ground forces⁴.

In June, South Africa increased the number of troops deployed to Cabo Delgado by sending Combat Team Alpha personnel. Last year, South Africa planned to send the largest SAMIM contingent: 1,495 troops of various specialties (ground, naval, and air forces, including intelligence and logistics personnel). But by the time operations to combat violent extremists began (in August 2021) it had deployed only 270 men⁵. At this moment, the number of South African military personnel deployed in Cabo Delgado is estimated to be 1,200 men⁶.

Angola, Botswana, DRC, Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia are the SADC countries that are contributing with troops and material to the mission of the regional bloc that supports Mozambique in the fight against violent extremism. The presence of SADC troops in Cabo Delgado was crucial for the destruction of important bases of violent extremists, recovery of various weapons, rescue of hostages and liberation of villages that were controlled by the enemy, mainly in the districts of Macomia, Muidumbe and Nangade.

Still, in the districts where SADC troops are operating, such as Macomia, Nangade and Muidumbe, the situation is still critical. The Rwandan troops, officially fighting in the districts of Mocímboa da Praia and Palma, had to descend to Macomia to support the South African and Mozambican troops. And this week the assault on a major base of the violent extremists in Kathupa, Macomia district, was announced by Mozambican forces. The Kathupa base housed the brains of violent extremism in Cabo Delgado after they were expelled from the Mbau base (Mocímboa da Praia) in 2021⁷.

Despite several achievements, the military offensive in Cabo Delgado was not accompanied by humanitarian and development actions. The result: there are still no conditions for the safe return of displaced populations to the areas directly affected by violent extremism.

This week it was reported the beheading of two civilians in Muaja, a village on the bor-



SADC mission in Cabo Delgado provisionally extended until August

der between the Ancuabe and Montepuez districts⁸. Yet this week, another attack was reported in Macomia, this time in the village of Nkoe, which is about 30 kilometers from the main town. More than 100 straws were burned and a child burned to death, according to reports cited by Integrity Magazine⁹.

Mocímboa da Praia, one of the most affected districts by violent extremism, only began to receive local residents who had fled the conflict last month. It was on June 9th that Rwandan military and police escorted the first group of 123 people from the displaced people camp of Quitunda (Palma district) to the neighborhood of Nanduandua (Mocímboa da Praia municipality).¹⁰

This Saturday (July 16), Televisão de Moçambique (TVM) reported that 590 displaced people had already returned to Nanduandua, in Mocímboa da Praia. The approximately 600 people who have already returned to their homes were part of the 3,556 displaced ones who are in Quitunda, a village where the resettlement village for families affected by the Mozambique LNG project is located, led by the French oil company TotalEnergie¹¹.

While in the northern districts of Cabo Del-

gado they make sporadic attacks, violent extremists have expanded the conflict to the south of the province, especially in the Ancuabe district. The situation is worsening the humanitarian crisis in the province, with new internally displaced persons registered. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), through its displacement monitoring matrix (DTM), estimates the number of new internally displaced persons (IDPs) recorded in June at 36,000.¹²

In addition to the humanitarian drama, the expansion of the conflict to the south of Cabo Delgado threatens many mineral resource and gemstone exploration projects. For example, the Australian mining company Syrah Resources, which has been mining graphite in the Balama district since 2020, has suspended road transport activities due to attacks in the vicinity of its mine¹³. Triton Minerals Limited, which lost two workers at its Ancuabe graphite project, has suspended trading on the Australian stock exchange due to insecurity in southern Cabo Delgado¹⁴.

Montepuez Ruby Mining (MRM), a 75% owned subsidiary of Britain's Gemfields, has expressed concern over the approaching at-

⁴ https://cddmoz.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/COMBATE-AO-EXTREMISMO-VIOLENTO-EM-CABO-DELGADO_-Dez-dias-depois-do-lancamento-oficial-da-missao-tropas-da-SADC-ainda-nao-comecaram-a-combater-1.pdf

⁵ https://cddmoz.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/COMBATE-AO-EXTREMISMO-VIOLENTO-EM-CABO-DELGADO_-Dez-dias-depois-do-lancamento-oficial-da-missao-tropas-da-SADC-ainda-nao-comecaram-a-combater-1.pdf

⁶ <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/featured/combat-team-alpha-sets-up-base-in-macomia-ahead-of-operations/>

⁷ <https://www.voportugues.com/a/presidente-mo%C3%A7ambique-anuncia-captura-de-mais-uma-base-terrorista-em-cabo-delgado/6660015.html>

⁸ <https://integritymagazine.co.mz/en/arquivos/1435>

⁹ <https://integritymagazine.co.mz/en/arquivos/1400>

¹⁰ <https://www.mod.gov.rw/news-detail/the-government-of-the-republic-of-mozambique-officially-returns-the-people-of-mocimboa-da-praia-city-to-their-homes>

¹¹ <https://cddmoz.org/seguranca-volta-aos-distritos-do-gas-conflito-desce-para-sul-de-cabo-delgado-e-ameaca-projectos-de-grafite-rubis-e-energia-solar-2/>

¹² <https://cddmoz.org/crise-humanitaria-em-cabo-delgado-agrava-se-com-registo-de-36-mil-novos-deslocados-internos-2/>

¹³ <https://www.reuters.com/article/syrah-resources-mozambique-idUSKBN2NQ059>

¹⁴ <https://mznews.co.mz/en/syrah-resources-suspende-transportes-para-sua-mina-de-grafite-em-cabo-delgado-apos-segundo-ataque/>

tacks on its ruby concession. Ancuabe, one of the districts targeted by attacks, is located 65 kilometers from Namanhumbir, the site of MRM's operations. "The incidents are reported to have occurred between 15 and 40 kilometers north of national roads n°1 and n°14 (EN1 and EN14), the main route used by MRM to travel to and from Pemba." MRM has restricted travel, but has kept mining and processing operations unaltered¹⁵.

In addition to the SADC mission, Rwandan troops have also completed one year in Cabo Delgado. In fact, Rwanda was the first to deploy its troops in June 2021, when 880 military personnel and 120 more police landed in Cabo Delgado to fight against violent extremism¹⁶. Three months after the first deployment, President Paul Kagame said the number of Rwandan troops fighting in Cabo Delgado had increased to 2,000 men¹⁷.



¹⁵ <https://cddmoz.org/seguranca-volta-aos-distrutos-do-gas-conflito-desce-para-sul-de-cabo-delgado-e-ameaca-projectos-de-grafite-rubis-e-energia-solar-2/>
¹⁶ https://cddmoz.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/MILITARIZACAO-DE-CABO-DELGADO_-880-militares-e-120-policias-do-Ruanda-3.000-militares-da-SADC_-E-agora-Senhor-Presidente-isto-nao-e-uma-salada-de-intervencoes.pdf
¹⁷ <https://www.africa-press.net/mozambique/video/nearly-2000-rwandan-troops-fighting-insurgency-in-mozambique>



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