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**POST-ELECTION CRISIS AND TROPICAL CYCLONE:
WORSENING SOCIAL SITUATION IN CABO DELGADO
PROVINCE**

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SUMMARY

The Rwandan offensive in the forests of Macomia made it possible to hold political campaigns and elections in the district headquarters of north-eastern Cabo Delgado. However, as a result of the post-election protests, the conflict tensions in the province worsened. Since October, there have been popular protests in the areas where the extractive industries are concentrated and in the main urban centres in the south of Cabo Delgado, but also a resurgence of the jihadist initiative, that recovered the military initiative. In the north of Nampula, *nhaparama* movements have emerged that are in direct confrontation with the State. The destructive effects of Cyclone Chido have further increased the pressure on humanitarian organisations, aggravating the existing structural weaknesses in the province in terms of the provision of health services, education, humanitarian assistance, and economic activities.

INTRODUCTION

In the second half of 2024, the security situation in the province of Cabo Delgado stabilised somewhat, due to a Rwandan military offensive in the Macomia forests. This allowed the electoral campaign to take place in the main district headquarters in September and early October. However, the conflict in the province and the humanitarian situation worsened following the post-election violence and Cyclone Chido. Based on information gathered by observers in 10 districts of Cabo Delgado (Palma, Mocímboa da Praia, Nangande, Mueda, Muidumbe, Macomia, Quissanga, Pemba, Montepuez and Chiúre), this Destaques Rural aims to characterise the conditions of security and State reconstruction in the province. After a description of the recovery of the guerrilla initiative in the northeast of Cabo Delgado and the impact on new displacements of people, this paper analyses the process of State reconstruction regarding the provision of health services, education, humanitarian aid, and economic activities. It argues that the post-election conflicts have aggravated tensions in the province, with a direct impact on major economic projects that have suspended their activities, and on the humanitarian assistance process. The effects of Cyclone Chido have further increased the pressure on humanitarian organisations, aggravating the existing structural weaknesses in the province.

1) FROM THE RWANDAN OFFENSIVE TO THE RECOVERY OF THE GUERRILLA INITIATIVE - IMPACTS ON POPULATION MOVEMENTS

Since August, there has been a Rwandan offensive on the Macomia coast, which resulted in a reduction in the insurgents' initiative in the following weeks. There have been reports of 'bombings' in the village of Mucojo, which had been controlled by the armed group, as well as of attempted attacks to their bases in the Catupa forest. As in August 2019, when the Wagner group launched several attacks on insurgent bases in the Mbau forests during the election campaign period, this Rwandan offensive has once again facilitated party activities in the main district headquarters in the north-east of the province. In the last week of September, Frelimo candidate Daniel Chapo, visited the districts of Mocímboa da Praia and Muidumbe. In the south of the province, the election campaign went relatively smoothly, with rallies by the various presidential candidates.

In mid-October, the onset of post-election tensions led to the dispersal of the security forces to various municipalities across the country in order to deal with the growing wave of protests. As a result, the insurgency regained the initiative. Although there was little information about the success of the Rwandan offensive through the Catupa forest, the rebels conducted almost daily attacks along the Messalo river valley, particularly on the administrative posts of Mbau (Mocímboa da Praia district), Chitunda (Muidumbe) and Chai (Macomia). In November, the incursions spread to the districts of Meluco, Ancuabe and Chiúre (Katapua and Marere administrative posts), triggering new waves of displaced people. In Nangade there were small attacks in the villages of Nkongga and Quinto Congresso, reaching as far as Litingina, with unverified reports about attempts to gain access to Tanzania. According to survivors' accounts, these attacks were aimed at obtaining food, with peasants being beheaded found along the way. Several explosions with improvised explosive devices were reported in the forests of Mocímboa da Praia and Macomia, affecting Rwandan and Mozambican civilian and military vehicles.

In the districts of Mueda and Muidumbe, security is essentially being provided by the local force. Voices on the ground refer to a greater passivity of the local force. The lack of military equipment and conditions for evacuating and assisting the wounded increase the fear of persecution by the insurgents, so that their actions are mostly limited to defensive tasks.

In Montepuez, young people have been recruited into the local armed forces, particularly in the main town and in Namanhumbir. Young people are recruited from different ethno-linguistic groups, with a higher proportion of descendants of former combatants. The oldest members of the Local Force on the plateau earn a monthly salary of 6,700 meticaís, but many are still processing documents.

In the north of Quissanga district, there continues to be peaceful coexistence between the insurgents and the local population. In the district headquarters town, there are reports of improved relations between the Defence and Security Forces and local individuals, with reports of inter-help in terms of health support (on the part of the military) and water supply (on the part of the population). In the Quirimba Island, the islanders remain highly suspicious of the Armed Forces, given their history of aggression against fishermen and boat crews. According to local accounts, although there were no reprisals against the young people who lived with the *Alshababis* during the occupation of the main town in Quissanga, in the Quirimba Island persecution of these individuals was observed. The islanders are said to have “*slept in the bush*” for a week in fear of the military's actions.

However, throughout 2023 and the first half of 2024, there was a tendency for people to return to the north-east of Cabo Delgado. Recent attacks and guerrilla movements have triggered villagers' fear and flight, particularly in the lowlands of Muidumbe, several villages in Nangade, Ancuabe, Meluco and Chiúre. The feeling of insecurity has led to the abandonment of the respective production areas during the sowing season, jeopardising the agricultural campaign and exacerbating food insecurity.

2) PRECARIOUSNESS OF PUBLIC SERVICES

a) The health sector

In the health sector, there are still chronic problems with shortages of medicines and generalised corruption among staff, particularly in the health facilities located in the district headquarters. According to reports, surgeries, blood transfusions and meals for hospitalised patients depend on nurses being paid money. When available, in-patient food is limited to beans and maize flour.

Several health centres continue to have problems with lack of energy due to a lack of budget, which is detrimental to the conservation of vaccines and night care and treatment. Childbirths continue to be carried out by the light of staff mobile phone torches.

The most critical situations are in the conflict zones. In the administrative post of Mbau, access to health services is facilitated by Rwandan troops. In the village of Macomia, Mozambican military doctors operate in the existing health facility. The population complains about the lack of attention to the care of civilians and of medicines. In the lower Muidumbe area, health centres have been set up in tents or private homes as an alternative to the destruction of health centres. However, recent attacks have led to technicians and equipment being moved to safer areas, leaving the population more vulnerable.

In Nangade District, only the district headquarters town and Ntamba have operational health facilities, with the rest being rehabilitated and dependent on mobile brigades. In Quissanga, a health facility is now operational at the Mahate administrative post, opening the access to Quissanga Sede, but there is high pressure on health services.

In the most hard-to-reach areas, populations are dependent on mobile brigades, which in turn is conditioned to funding from non-governmental organisations.

b) The education sector

Despite efforts to rebuild classrooms and bring back teachers, the education sector remains badly affected. Schools have reopened in several villages in Nangade, but many children have abandoned school to accompany their parents on the cashew harvesting campaign, an important income-generating activity.

Attempts to reopen schools in the low-lying areas of Muidumbe, in the administrative post of Mbau and north of Quissanga, schooling has been interrupted throughout the year due to armed attacks. Many of the families who have returned to the lowlands of Muidumbe, and who are now under pressure to leave, had left their school-age children in displacement centres or relatives' homes in Mueda, Montepuez or Chiúre. Thus, in Mueda, class sizes remain very high. At the local secondary school, classes typically have more than 100 pupils. In primary schools in the Mapupulo administrative post (Montepuez district), class sizes vary between 140 and 200 pupils. Some NGOs continue to make efforts to build classrooms, but the lack of teachers does not reduce the teacher-pupil ratio. In Chiúre, many families have returned to the north of the province or to other centres where there is support, reducing the number of students in schools, especially in the displacement centres of Meculane and Marrupa. In November, school enrolment campaigns were held in Quissanga for children who had been out of the education system for the past few years.

As they are still awaiting the payment of previous years' allowances, no teacher has agreed to teach a second class in order to reduce class sizes. Given the high density of pupils, many teachers give group tests, to the detriment of the evaluation process. There are also problems with teachers who are poorly distributed, concentrated mainly in urban areas and reluctant to move to more remote areas. Several schools from grade 1 to 6 have only 3 teachers.

Corruption remains endemic, with teachers demanding sums of between 100 and 500 meticais from students with negative scores in order to pass. Stories of sexual corruption are common among female students.

The second half of 2024 was strongly affected by the elections and post-election conflicts. From September onwards, district education directorates pressured principals, pedagogical directors, and teachers to take part in election campaign activities. As a result, many classes were interrupted, leaving many students without teachers. The exam

period coincided with the phase of intensified electoral protests, resulting in many students being absent for fear of travelling.

The education system has also been affected by fainting spells among students, which have lasted throughout the school year in Palma, Mocímboa da Praia, Nangade, Mueda, Montepuez, Pemba and Chiúre, in general affecting girls. Some children have been taken to health centres because neither teachers nor technicians know how to deal with the situation.

3) HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

a) Worsening humanitarian needs

The problems of security and access to agricultural land, and also to production technologies, as well as the excessive rains that occurred between January and April 2024, led to a reduction in food harvests. Throughout the second half of the year, many families had no agricultural surplus and became heavily dependent on external support. On the Mueda plateau, food aid has been irregular. In Nangade, aid was distributed until July, but stopped thereafter. In the displacement centres around Mueda, distribution takes place every two months, while in other centres distribution has been interrupted but seed distribution has started. In the upper zone, food distribution is now carried out on a quarterly basis, while in the lower zone it is severely hampered by military insecurity. In Mueda, access to water worsens during the dry season, becoming scarce in the lower areas and making supplies to the displacement centres more irregular. In the main town, a 20-litre gallon of water sells for 30 meticaís.

In the main village of Mocímboa da Praia, food support is provided through the distribution of 4,230 meticaís monthly food vouchers. In most villages, households received around 50kg of rice, 15kg of beans and cooking oil every month. This distribution continued during the election campaign period, which may have benefited the ruling party. The distribution of vouchers triggered food inflation. In the district headquarters town, the price of a 25kg bag of maize flour rose from 1,200 meticaís in mid-October to 2,000 meticaís in mid-November. In the north-eastern part of the province, the arrival of the rains and the resulting problems with road traffic, together with the restrictions imposed by the protests, led to an increase in food prices.

In Macomia and Quissanga, food distribution was heavily affected by the attacks that took place in the first half of 2024, exacerbating the vulnerability of the population. The recent distribution of mobile phones to provide food aid via mobile wallet services is generating rumours. In Quissanga, families are surprised to receive free *smartphones* and speculate that the beneficiaries will be kidnapped or murdered. The distribution of phones to send money is also taking place in other districts, such as Nangade and Montepuez.

Further south, in the districts of Montepuez and Chiúre, the trend towards reducing food support continues, with an attempt to favour the neediest families, particularly widows with children or families with elderly people. In Montepuez, food distribution tends to be concentrated among the Mapupulo population, which is severely affected by the lack of productive land. Tensions between displaced and native populations persist, and mistrust about the distribution of food aid to the latter tends to lead to conflict. In Chiúre, there are numerous reports of displaced people being registered in different places, sometimes under different names, and of families being divided into different centres in order to receive aid. The diet is based on cassava and green mangoes, which are sometimes exchanged for moringa for consumption. Food insecurity contributes to an increase in promiscuous behaviour and early marriages.

b) Difficulties in re-establishing economic activities

In Nangade, cashew production has returned to normal, and many families have joined the campaign. There has been support for the distribution of machetes for clearing land and pruning cashew trees, as well as products for spraying, but these are insufficient to meet demand and mainly benefit the producers closest to the district headquarters. Some producers travel to Tanzania to buy products for spraying, but the price is high for families without capital. Difficulties in handling the cashew trees contribute to low production and the consequent perpetuation of poverty. The nuts are usually sold in Tanzania, where prices are much more attractive (around 120 meticaís per kilo in the neighbouring country, compared with 60 in Mozambique), in places indicated by the Tanzanian authorities. Several traders who tried to sell the product outside the designated routes did not return. In some cases, their bodies were found near the Rovuma River, and it is suspected that they were murdered by the Tanzanian military, presumably on suspicion of belonging to the insurgency. In Nangade, the bank that existed before the conflict is still closed and people have to travel to Mueda to withdraw money. In Mocímboa da Praia, no bank branch has yet opened.

In the municipality of Mocímboa da Praia, families have moved to Manilha, 15 kilometres from the main town, where land has been distributed for production. TotalEnergies has contributed to the distribution of cassava branches and coconut trees, but the support is not enough to meet the needs.

In the upper areas of Muidumbe, the cultivated area is tending to increase, partly due to the concentration of population in the lower areas. Due to insecurity, the fields in the lower areas of Muidumbe are largely abandoned and the movement of transporters to these areas has reduced significantly.

The poor agricultural season, due to the rains, has reduced surpluses, affecting marketing and increasing the price of maize: a 20-litre can of maize has increased from 250 to 400 meticaís in the rural areas of Muidumbe, reaching 500 meticaís in Mueda, 600 in Nangade and 900 in Mocímboa da Praia.

In the resettlement centres of Mapupulo (Montepuez district), promises of land distribution have not been kept. The areas designated for the distribution of plots to displaced people are quite far from the headquarters of the post, with no infrastructure or public services, so the beneficiaries have remained in the resettlement centre. In Chiúre, there is still insufficient land for all the displaced people to cultivate, which has been exacerbated by the arrival of new displaced people following the recent armed attacks. The land being cultivated by the displaced people is borrowed land, the owners of which often demand money for its use.

4) THIS IS THE LAST THING WE NEED: POST-ELECTION CONFLICTS AND CYCLONE CHIDO

a) Tensions and (post-)electoral conflicts

In the municipality of Chiúre, which has been run by Renamo since the end of 2023, there have been various tensions between Frelimo and the opposition. Despite the appointment of new neighbourhood secretaries by the mayor, the old neighbourhood secretaries, appointed by Frelimo, have remained in office. The resolution of local *milandos* begins with the choice of the neighbourhood secretary to settle them. In Frelimo-led localities, only declarations issued by Chiúre neighbourhood secretaries appointed by this party are accepted. Frelimo neighbourhood secretaries claim that the boreholes installed during the previous government belong to the Frelimo party, giving priority to Frelimo sympathisers and calling on opposition sympathisers to dig the boreholes in question.

Due to the insecurity, the census was problematic in the districts of Quissanga, Macomia, southern Mocímboa da Praia and lower Muidumbe, with messages and instructions from the rebels not to participate in the process. However, many citizens chose to register in order to obtain an identity document and avoid problems with the authorities. The high turnout and long queues led to the collection of small sums of money (50 meticaís) by the polling stations.

On the Makonde plateau, the campaign went relatively smoothly, with the Frelimo party clearly dominating. In Mueda, there were a few caravans of opposition supporters, with small groups of fearless young people singing slogans against the ruling party. Opposition supporters are often threatened by neighbourhood leaders, who intimidate parents into controlling their children, often by threatening to stop paying ex-combatant allowances. There are many stories of young family members demanding part of their pensions from their elders as a condition for not campaigning for the opposition. In Mueda, the Catholic Church is also a way of controlling opposition members. While Catholics are generally associated with sympathisers of the Frelimo party, Protestant churches are associated with members of the opposition, so that when these churches ask to hold certain events (such as film projections for evangelisation) they face obstacles

from the authorities. The local police, who are strongly partisan, have threatened *to baton-bit (chamboquear)* anyone who sings "Go away Frelimo" (*Frelimo suka*). Opposition supporters risk losing the support of the local force in the event of a dispute.

Throughout the province, the Frelimo party used State resources to carry out political campaigning. In Montepuez, primary school desks were taken to party meetings without the teachers' knowledge. Throughout the province, Frelimo party cells were reactivated in public schools, usually mobilised by the politically appointed principals. In the pedagogical meetings with teachers, political issues are introduced by the school principals or district education directors. According to the interviewed teachers, at these meetings they are reminded that "*you know how you got here*". Anyone who is reluctant to join the party's campaign is "*labelled as being in opposition*" and potentially subject to reprisals. Principals say they have been instructed by phone by officials from the District Directorate for Education and Youth to allow teachers and also students with voter registration cards to take part in rallies for the ruling party. These actions were resisted by some students, but others took part, many as a way of excusing themselves from classes, others for fear of failing, others out of political sympathy. Teachers were instructed to buy red shirts and contribute to the Frelimo party's campaign. On the Makonde Plateau, the pressure is more evident. Civil servants who do not take part in the campaign are called in by the respective director and asked to clearly position themselves, at the risk of creating obstacles, for example to mobility between work sectors.

In Pemba, countless civil servants said that they took part in the rallies organised by the Frelimo party, only to be seen by their bosses, for fear of reprisals. Prominent businessmen sponsored the purchase of T-shirts which they distributed to key figures in the State apparatus, extending support and patronage networks.

Throughout the province, there have been initiatives to collect (data from) voter cards, fuelling countless theories about their purpose. According to party members involved in these actions, they are electoral polls with the aim of finding out the universe of Frelimo supporters, in order to compare it with the universe of voters and estimate electoral results, thus anticipating the need for future electoral manipulations.

In Mocímboa da Praia, the party campaign was very orderly, with Daniel Chapo being the only candidate to hold a political rally. Silvério Simango was in Mueda and Nangade, while Venâncio Mondlane concentrated on the south of the province. Unlike Daniel Chapo's marches, which involved the mobilisation and massive transport of people from surrounding towns, often lured by promises of clothes, food and beverages, Venâncio Mondlane's campaign did not benefit from the same logistics. His supporters mobilised much more spontaneously, involving informal vendors and taxi drivers, among other young people. Groups of young people spontaneously escorted the opposition candidate by land to neighbouring districts.

On election day, the process was politically controlled. As in the rest of the country, in all the districts of Cabo Delgado, the STAE-appointed Chairmen of the Polling Stations were members of the Frelimo party. There were promises of rewards in the event of an electoral victory. Party members received re-charges from Movitel to check that their supporters had fulfilled their duty to vote. Similarly, there were reports of ballot boxes being stuffed with pre-filled in ballots for Frelimo, but also of falsified voting minutes, with the ruling party experiencing greater difficulty in the province's southern municipal areas (Pemba, Montepuez and Chiúre) and in the mining areas of Namanhumbir (in the Montepuez district).

The post-election period was marked by protests on the Pemba-Montepuez axis, in contrast to the calm experienced in the north of the province. In Pemba, there were several marches through the streets of the city, involving dozens of municipality young people, sometimes interrupted by the use of bullets and tear gas by the police. The protests peaked on 5 and 6 December. During the two days of protests, demonstrators destroyed two statues of Alberto Chipande, the hero of the 'first shot', and at least five Frelimo party headquarters were burned down. The violence of these acts contrasted with the relatively peaceful nature of the protests, with many stories circulating about demonstrators coming from other areas, particularly the coast of Nampula, but also about the involvement of young people with links to the al-Shabaab. In conversations with peasants in the north of Quissanga, guerrillas expressed support for the protests called by Venâncio Mondlane.

Throughout December, the national roads from Pemba to Montepuez and from Metoro to Namialo were closed for several days, with drivers being demanded money. The markets in Montepuez did not open for several days. In Pemba, Montepuez and Chiúre there were night demonstrations with people banging pots and pans. These demonstrations were generally peaceful, but in some places, roadblocks were set up. As tensions rose, commercial and public buildings were attacked. The authorities responded by arresting demonstrators, who were detained for several days. Videos of the killing of Podemos party leaders involved in the demonstrations circulated through social media, with eyewitnesses accusing SERNIC members. From the end of December, in meetings with the Local Force and the Mozambican Women's Organisation (OMM), chaired by leaders of the Association of Former Combatants of the National Liberation Struggle (ACLIN), members of the Local Force were instructed to fire directly at demonstrators.

The post-election protests environment brought other local tensions to the surface. In Namanhumbir, in October and November, there were two invasions by thousands of artisanal miners of areas concessioned to the Montepuez Ruby Mining. There were reports of clashes between police and protesters, with police firing shots and the miners throwing pickaxes. Some weapons were seized by the protesters and later recovered. The conflict resulted in an unknown number of deaths and injuries. On 22 December, sacked workers from a company subcontracted by the Montepuez Ruby Mining blocked the national road. Fearing mass protests, the mining company suspended operations until

the political situation stabilised. In Balama, problems with the payment of compensation to the resettled population led to the suspension of operations by the graphite mining company. This wave of protests also took place further south, in the provinces of Nampula and Zambézia, with reports of invasions of the tourmaline mines in Chalaua and Alto Molócué, and the heavy sand exploration area in Moma. Taking advantage of the post-election climate of protest, in November people had already gathered at the gates of Afungi, demanding compensation for the alleged transfer of land.

In the north of Cabo Delgado province, the post-election period has been relatively calm. Demonstrations have been controlled by the local police, and disgruntled individuals fear the "link to terrorism". In the whole of the north (Mueda, Nangade, Muidumbe, Mocímboa da Praia and Palma) there were no protests against the election results, neither demonstrations nor actions with pots or whistles.

b) Cyclone Chido

Cyclone Chido hit the coast of Cabo Delgado on 15 December with winds estimated at 205 km per hour, wreaking havoc in Pemba, Mecúfi and Metuge and worsening the situation of displaced families.

Figure 1: Tropical Cyclone Chido's trajectory until 16 December

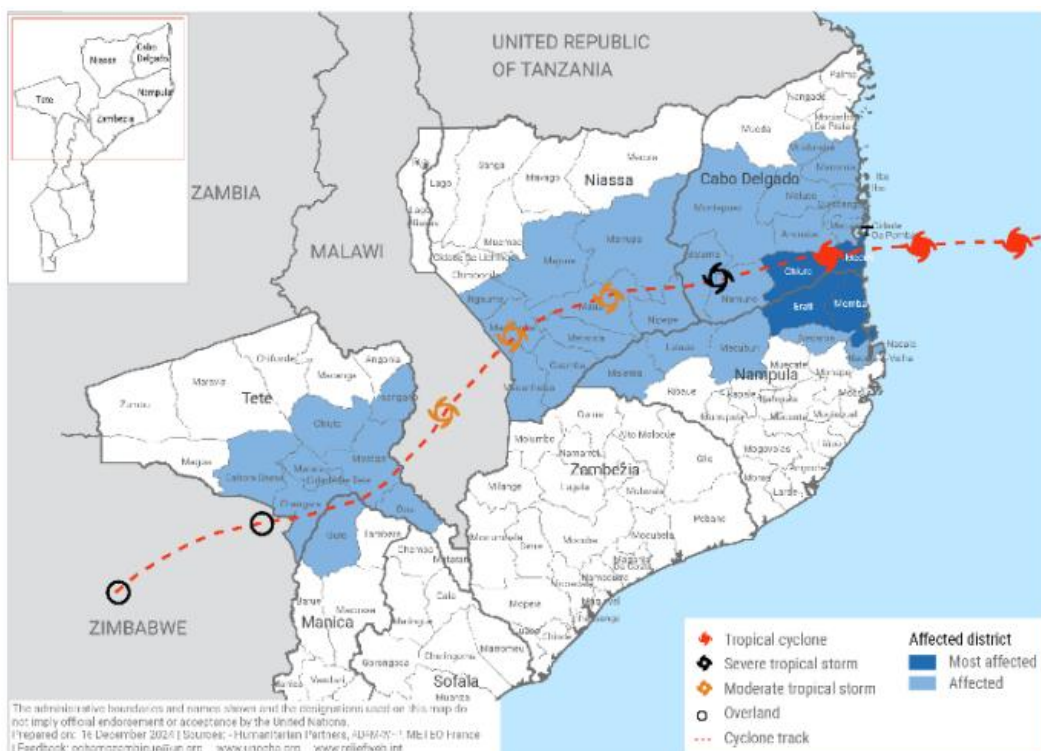


Figure 1: Trajetória do Ciclone Tropical Cyclone. Até 16 de Dezembro.

Fonte: Meteo France

Source: Meteo France

According to INGD data published on 22 December, the cyclone caused at least 120 deaths and 868 injuries in the affected areas. Strong winds damaged 118,605 homes, 52 health centres and 1,126 classrooms (affecting more than 100,000 students), as well as 10 water systems. In the days following the event, power supply was interrupted, affecting several neighbourhoods in the city of Pemba, making it difficult to communicate and gather information on the cyclone's impact.

The humanitarian response was hampered by a lack of financial support from humanitarian agencies and worsening security conditions due to post-election protests, as well as the movement of insurgent groups through Ancuabe and Chiúre. Several places have been without power for several days, contributing to the rotting of food products and hampering telecommunications. INGD estimates that more than 690,000 people have been directly affected by the cyclone, with around 90,000 children being particularly vulnerable and in need of urgent assistance (UNICEF, 17.12.2024). The heavy rainfall could worsen water and sanitation conditions and, as in previous years, trigger a new cholera epidemic in the region.

Humanitarian organisations have launched an appeal to mobilise 88 million dollars to meet the immediate needs (OCHA, 27.12.2024) of 320,000 people, including 156,000 women and girls, directly affected by the cyclone. At least 77,000 people received some form of humanitarian assistance in the 12 days following the cyclone.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The public sector remains severely weakened, characterised by budget constraints, precarious operating equipment, high levels of political party influence and opportunistic civil servants who "privatise" public services to compensate for their low salaries. Corruption is evident in the charging of fees to enter the public sector, to move between employment sectors and to provide services to users. Civil servants remain a very vulnerable occupational group, with low salaries and precarious working conditions. Despite being one of the main targets of the insurgency, they are under pressure to return to their jobs in the north-east of the province. During the post-electoral conflicts, State employees, particularly those responsible for security and the collection of municipal taxes and fees, were targeted by protesting youths both south of Cabo Delgado and north of Nampula. Strongly partisan, State institutions are perceived as Frelimo institutions and are therefore targets of popular anger.

Health services remain heavily dependent on support from the United Nations, NGOs, and the Rwandan military. The education sector was severely affected throughout 2024 by military insecurity, student absenteeism, disruption of schooling during the election campaign and post-election conflict, and school drop-outs due to economic activities. All these phenomena have affected tens of thousands of children, perpetuating illiteracy and illiteracy rates, jeopardising the socio-professional integration of young people, reproducing poverty and making populations vulnerable to extremist and violent groups.

With the rainy season approaching and scarcity of surpluses, a period of food insecurity has returned, affecting not only the peasants, but also the Mozambican army (with its chronic logistical problems) and the armed guerrillas. In many places, the diet is based on cassava and green mangoes. With military insecurity in the north-east, no land for displaced people in the south and insufficient support for economic activities, the region remains very dependent on food aid. Where humanitarian assistance is provided, there are rumours of opportunism, injustice in the distribution of resources and conflicts between host and displaced populations.

As in the rest of the country, the electoral process was politically manipulated, with heavy pressure on civil servants, especially teachers, and the ruling party controlling all the polling stations^o chairpersons. Frelimo won in the highlands, of course, but struggled in the main urban centres in the south of the province, where electoral protests were concentrated.

The epicentres of protest were concentrated in three major geographical areas. Firstly, in large urban areas, due to the concentration of pockets of poverty, surviving on informality and poorly paid and stigmatising activities, which coexist explosively with an emerging consumer society. Secondly, in areas where large extractive projects are concentrated, problems of payment of compensation and land, and access to natural resources conflicts, lack of jobs for local youth and labour conflicts are re-emerging. Thirdly, in transport corridors (particularly the Nacala and Pemba-Lichinga corridors), through which important raw materials are transported abroad, without benefiting the local population.

Taking advantage of the climate of national protest, several spontaneous movements of informal vendors, peasants, artisanal miners, and workers in formal sector companies have emerged, putting strong pressure on large extractive companies. The suspension of economic activities has an impact on State revenues, balance of payments, and hundreds of direct and indirect jobs, further aggravating the region's economic situation. The post-election conflicts are intertwined with the problems resulting from the increasingly extractive and extroverted nature of the national economy, but also from the formalisation of the exploitation of these resources for the benefit of foreign companies, in alliance with national elites closer to the decision-making centres.

Videos of the desecration of Alberto Chipande's statue in the streets of Pemba, in the face of police passivity, have circulated on social media, eliciting a mixture of admiration and satisfaction from many citizens. These videos symbolise popular dissatisfaction with a political figure whose charisma is deeply shaken, and who is widely portrayed as an arrogant and despotic landowner, insensitive to the concerns of the majority of the Mozambicans.

The post-election conflicts and Cyclone Chido have exacerbated the structural weaknesses in the province. Despite the presence on the ground of many UN,

humanitarian, and NGO agencies, both local and national, a number of obstacles have limited support to the population. Firstly, the lack of funds available to sponsor aid to the population. Secondly, the poor condition of access roads due to flooding, roadblocks as a result of clashes between demonstrators and the police, the damage to the telecommunications system, as well as the advances of the insurgency in the Ancuabe district, limited the movement of vehicles to support and assist the population. Finally, the post-cyclone period coincided with the festive season and the absence of many humanitarian aid workers, which hampered response capacity.

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