

LATEST TRENDS

The jihadist insurgency in Cabo Delgado province seems to be rebounding amid faltering security operations and the draw-down of some international troops. On 10 May, militants staged a large-scale assault on the strategic town of Macomia. Meanwhile, preparations for the general elections slated for October face obstacles.

WHAT TO WATCH IN THE COMING WEEKS AND MONTHS

1 A return to a full-blown Islamic State insurgency in Cabo Delgado is possible

There is a significant risk that Islamic State in Mozambique will take advantage of the shrinking international mission and the weakness of Mozambican forces to rebuild its ranks and step up its attacks in frequency and scale. After Macomia, militants could target the towns of Meluco, Ancuabe and Metuge. They could also raid prisons in or around the provincial capital Pemba to free detained comrades.

The mandate of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) mission expires on **15 July**, but South Africa, whose 1,495 soldiers make up two thirds of its personnel, and Tanzania are expected to keep some troops in Cabo Delgado until at least **December** to support Maputo's counter-insurgency efforts.

Rwanda will deploy an additional 2,000 troops to Cabo Delgado, bringing the total number of Rwandan soldiers in Mozambique to 4,500.

TO WATCH What shape the post-SADC security arrangements between Maputo and its partners in Pretoria and Dodoma will take; whether the newly deployed Rwandan contingent will take over from SADC troops or focus on different areas or objectives.

Potential Consequences

If the uptick in Islamic State attacks becomes an all-out offensive, it will likely lead to hundreds of deaths, spark a major displacement crisis and put tens of thousands at risk of food insecurity, particularly if NGOs already short on aid supplies stop operations because of security concerns.

A fresh insurgent offensive will also likely affect the operations of businesses, including the French hydrocarbon giant TotalEnergies, which is hoping to resume work in the Afungi peninsula near Palma, three years after its gas project there was halted due to insecurity.

2 The forthcoming presidential and legislative elections will likely be chaotic

Elections are planned for **9 October**, but the electoral commission appears unprepared and short of funds, while questions about the electoral calendar remain unresolved.

Should militants intensify attacks in Cabo Delgado in the coming weeks, they could impede voter registration and delivery of voter cards.

The ruling FRELIMO party is expected to do whatever it considers necessary to secure victory, including intimidating opposition voters or using other tactics associated with overt election theft.

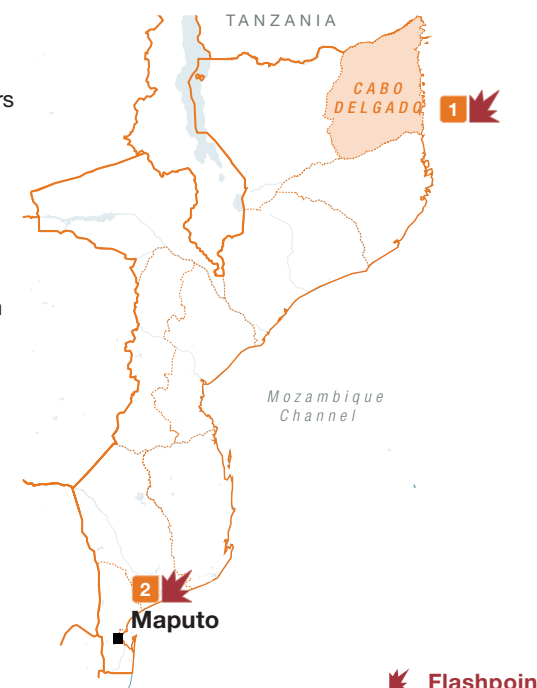
Opposition leaders could call for protests and an electoral boycott ahead of the polls if they suspect foul play; anti-government marches could trigger a violent response from security forces.

TO WATCH Possible election delay; potential threats or violence against election officials, observers or opposition supporters; protests by opposition RENAMO party.

Potential Consequences

If elections lack credibility, a post-election crisis could unfold, increasing prospects of nationwide instability.

If FRELIMO is widely seen to have stolen the election, its agreements with RENAMO's armed wing could be in jeopardy. Violent protests or clashes could occur in RENAMO strongholds after the elections, including Nampula province in the north and the central provinces of Sofala and Inhambane.



Flashpoint

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On the Horizon sounds the alarm about conflicts and crises that may emerge over the next three to six months. It identifies key actors and dates to watch in support of global conflict prevention efforts.



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