

## Conflict Weekly

Monthly Review of Violence in Mozambique  
26 August–23 September 2020

Montepuez



Mocimboa da praia



Gondola



Inchope



Assembleia da República



Presidência da República



One year after the latest peace agreement in Mozambique, political violence still rages on. In this edition's news clips, the most notorious feature is the absence of peace efforts. The game blame is the latest fashion, with the guerrilla in central Mozambique being accused of lack of interest in peace and the insurgents in Northern Cabo Delgado of being directed and financed from the outside – in fact diverting the attention to governance and formal political dynamics in the country.

This analysis is organized in different categories and shows how violence unfolds in Mozambique. Violence seems to be more than a ritual practice among political actors fighting for power, being increasingly used as an instrument for production and reproduction of social, and economic relations (and even for survival). It is CEPCB's perception that this constancy of violence might be blocking the possibility of creating discursive spaces and practical measures to promote peace in the country.

The full document with all the news clips can be accessed at: <https://cepcb.org.mz/category/conflict-weekly/>

#### Context

In this analysis, the news pieces are separated into different categories of violence: political, social, police brutality, gender and crime. We have also inserted news on structural aspects of violence in categories such as discrimination, marginalization, peace, dialogue and reconciliation. At a later stage, ritual crimes were also inserted in a separate category. This collection allows a more robust analysis of the violence in Mozambique, and helps to identify trends in how violence is perceived in order to boost the efforts to mitigate, and eventually, end violence. Even if the different kinds of violence seem different in their manifestations, as a human act they are, in our view, all related to the way individuals and human groups value life - the violation of political and individual rights are a common denominator in all kinds of violence.

#### Highlights - 26 August to 23 September 2020

**Political violence** has continued to top the media charts during the period covered in this analysis (6 August to 23 September 2020), especially in relation to the violence in Cabo Delgado and the central region of Mozambique. The conflict in Cabo Delgado has already led to a humanitarian crisis in the region, with many internally displaced people living either in formal refugee camps or being hosted elsewhere by relatives and friends. Some international actors, such as the United States government, have lined up to provide support to 8 thousand displaced people. The city of Pemba, the provincial capital of Cabo Delgado, has deferred requests from teachers displaced by the conflict and who live in rentals in the city. Former president Armando Guebuza has also thrown his weight into the debate on violence in the country. According to Guebuza, people are getting skeptical about the prospects of the violence ending in the country. that stance, claims Guebuza, might represent one of the biggest risks for sovereignty: “we are unsafe. We stopped believing in ourselves”, he said. In this sense, he made an appeal to Mozambicans not to lose hope and to continue fighting for peace.

The campaign for the conquering of the hearts and minds of young people in Mozambique in the fight against the insurgents continues. The public broadcaster *Radio Moçambique* has launched a project to mobilize young people to contribute in efforts to halt the progress of the “terrorist actions”. A judicial process against citizens accused of participating in the armed attacks in the northern districts of Cabo Delgado saw more than half being set free by the provincial court due to lack of evidence.

In another military conflict in central Mozambique, the Renamo Military Junta also carried out attacks that resulted in civilian deaths. The attacks drew condemnation from political figures and citizens, who have made an appeal for the members of the *Junta* to join the DDR process, with a parallel appeal for the Renamo party to negotiate with Mariano Nhongo, the leader of the *Junta* to solve the internal differences that led to the split between the political and military wing of the party.

Judging by the scant number of news published on the **Dialogue** category, the country is still quite far from discussing peace in a sustained manner. The NGO Institute for Multiparty Democracy considers that the “terrorist” attacks in Cabo Delgado, besides being a danger for the prospects of an effective peace, are taking away lives and jeopardising the fundamental citizens’ rights to freedom. The NGO also considers that the armed attacks are a stain to democracy and proposes dialogue as a strategy to stop the conflict in the North.

The process of political reconciliation with Renamo seems to be moving forward, with the **Reconciliation** category shelving more than 20 news pieces in the period under scrutiny. Reconciliation in Mozambique amounts basically to the DDR and it seems to date that the leadership of Frelimo and Renamo are satisfied with the process, who they consider to be on schedule. The President of the Republic oversaw one instance of the DDR at the Gorongosa Sierra in Sofala, where former Renamo soldiers presented their guns. On that occasion, the President took the opportunity to call on the *Military Junta* to surrender their weapons and join the DDR. The Institute for Multiparty Democracy defends that the demands of the *Military Junta* need to be accommodated in the DDR process before the DDR is over, and believes a dialogue between the government, Renamo and the *Junta* to be a useful tool to solve the differences between the three parties.

The news also reported that demobilized soldiers were happy to return to the midst of their families and relatives, and resume their lives. In a workshop relative to the 30 years of multiparty democracy in Mozambique, a group of women involved in the DDR asked civil society organizations and the public in general to help make their reintegration a success.

Number 6

The Parliament's Defense and Security Commission has made an appeal to the President of Renamo, Ossufo Momade, to be more interventive in the process of pacification in the country by initiating dialogue with the *Junta* to put an end to the armed attacks in the center of Mozambique. Ossufo Momade has offered to help the President of the Republic in the pacification of the region. Religious leaders, such as the Archbishop of Maputo Dom Francisco Chimoio, urged all Mozambicans to participate in the pacification process in the country, to make it effective.

There are 14 news pieces related to **social violence**. This category has news that are both related to acts that attest to mental disturbances in those who committed the acts, to news that are related to acts of mob justice. A woman in the central city of Chimoio cut off her son's ear as a punishment for him stealing peanuts, while a couple was detained in Manica district on charges of killing a year and half old child. In the Marracuane district, southern Mozambique, a woman was accused of voluntary manslaughter against her husband's lover. In Nampula, a suspected thief was shot dead in Nampula. And friend killed another friend because of a debt, and adults were accused of raping teenagers in Niassa and Maputo, respectively.

News on **gender-based violence and sexual crimes** continue to proliferate, placing this kind of violence amongst those most featured in the media. In Niassa province, a 41 years old woman was arrested, accused of recruiting teenagers to use as sex slaves. Rape was also featured in the news. A 13 years old girl was raped by neighbors in Matola after being tricked into taking a cool drink laced with sedatives, while a 15 years old girl was kept hostage in a residence of a 32 years old sexual predator. And a man killed his wife in a crime described as femicide. In overall, while the frontiers between gender and social based violence sometimes are thin, we can see that women in general comprise a disproportionate number of the victims.

In this period, news on police brutality were connected to the police violence and acts of abuse towards civilians. According to the media, the police shot a number of citizens, two of which fatally, in Zambezia province. The Center for Democracy and Development (CDD) has considered the police to be the face of human rights abuses in the country, and explains in a report that the first six months were characterized by arbitrary arrests e killings by the police. The Defense and Security Forces are also accused by some entities, amongst which civil society organizations and Amnesty International, of recurrent acts of human rights abuses against

Number 6

innocent civilians, during the skirmishes with the insurgents in Cabo Delgado, and demand that the government acts to investigate these claims and prosecutes accordingly.

**Traffic accidents** was also another unwelcomed occurrence amongst the categories of violence dealt with in this Weekly, leading to many deaths according to the authorities. A truck carrying logs veered out of its way leading to an accident involving two cars leading to five deaths in Changara district, in Tete. Still in tete, a frontal collision between two vehicles, amongst them a passenger bus, led to the death of five more individuals and a number of citizens with light and serious injuries. Deaths, injuries and material destruction from traffic accidents were also reported in Niassa, Maputo and Nampula provinces.

**Crime** has figured prominently in the news and in police reports, with 61 news connected to the category, the most common types of crime being kidnappings, assaults, thefts, and criminal deceptions.

**Weekly picks:**

This week analysis features two articles from Domingo and Savana weekly newspapers. The first one, with the title “entering into the wrong side of history”<sup>1</sup>, is authored by André Matola and was published in *Domingo*, and the second one was written by Luís Guevane and carries the title “Soldiers, on which side?”<sup>2</sup>, published in *Savana*. In his article, André Matola argues that Renamo Military Junta and its leader Mariano Nhongo have to “get into the right side of history”, by joining the peace process, and argues that what he considers internal disagreements within Renamo shouldn’t lead to the death of civilians. The author highlights positively the peace initiative by the President of the Republic Filipe Nyusi and of Renamo’s leader Ossufo Momade for continuing to reach-out to the breakaway faction in order to bring them into the DDR. He considers that the actions of the DDR, albeit localized, are worrisome as they lead to the spilling of the blood of innocents.

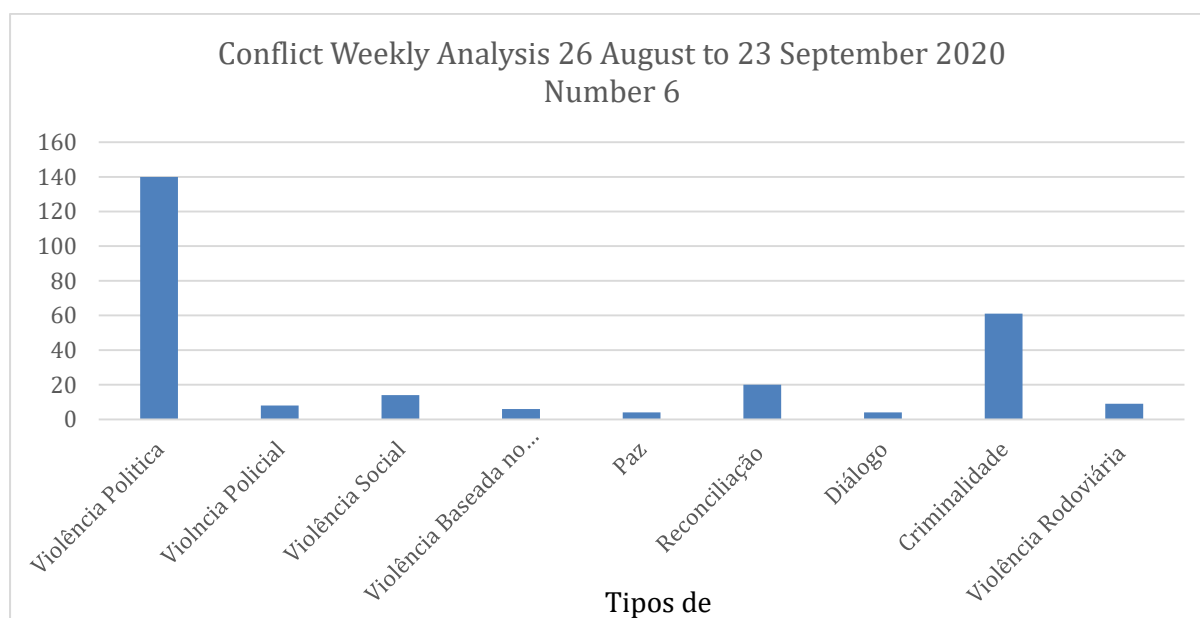
---

<sup>1</sup> (Domingo, 13 de Setembro de 2020, Pag:9)

<sup>2</sup> (Savana, 18 de Setembro de 2020, Pag:22)

Number 6

The other article on “Soldiers, on which side?” deals with the conflict on Northern Mozambique. It argues that much of the discussion is based on presumptions and competition for being right. This is fueled by the fact that reports indicate that the insurgents in their acts of summary execution of civilians use military equipment belonging to the Defense and Security Forces (such as when they were supposedly captured on a video executing a pregnant women). The author claims that denials from the government and the imputation of the acts in the video to terrorist and to consider the video an act of terrorist propaganda does not preclude the need for an investigation.



- *This publication was sponsored by the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung with funds of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of*

*Germany. This publication or parts of it can be used by others for free as long as they provide a proper reference to the original publication.*

- *The content of the publication is the sole responsibility the partner and does not necessarily reflect a position of RLS.*

Partner:



**Maputo, December de 2020**

**Equipa editorial:**

Milissão Nuvunga, Daniela Joane, Sheid Eura, Eduardo Changule, Ermenegildo Madede, Dilvan Chivangue, Ernesto Wate, Figorcía Furuma e Isabel Matias

The CEPCB brings weekly to citizens, politicians, and other decision-makers in the civil, community, and state fields, an analysis of violence in the country. This analysis shows how violence unfolds, and is organised into specific analytical categories. Violence in Mozambique *appears not only to be a common practice among political actors in the struggle for power, but also an instrument of production and reproduction of social, economic, and even individual survival relationships*. It is CEPCB's perception that the constancy of "violence" may be blocking the capacity to build a society of peace and prosperity. The different manifestations of violence seem to be intersecting and creating a rationality that builds the **citizen as a political subject product of violence** in Mozambique, and also builds **violence as an act of citizenship**.