

# Mozambique News Agency

## AIM Reports

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## Over 57,000 affected by cyclone Freddy

Tropical cyclone Freddy, which struck the southern province of Inhambane on 24 February has affected over 57,000 people, according to the National Emergency Operational Centre (CENOE). Giving a preliminary assessment of the damage caused by the cyclone, CENOE spokesperson Paulo Tomas said that 780 houses had been destroyed and a further 6,810 suffered damage.

Tomas was speaking at a CENOE meeting in Xai-Xai, the capital of the southern province of Gaza, which was drawing up an assessment of the current rainy season. “There were also impacts on other sectors, such as education, roads and power supply”, added Tomas, “but we are still compiling data”.

He added that the Mozambican relief agency, the National Disaster Management Institute (INGD) is currently assisting 18,187 flood victims in government-run accommodation centres. The INGD is providing them with food, water, health care and sanitation.

Meanwhile, in the central province of Sofala, the publicly owned electricity company, EDM, announced on 26 February that 15,000 of its clients in the city of Beira, and the southern part of the province, were without power because of damage to electrical infrastructure caused by the cyclone. EDM brigades were on the ground repairing the damage. In Inhambane, all the transmission lines affected by the cyclone have been repaired, except for the line from Funhalouro to Ndidiza, where work is continuing. About 3,000 EDM clients are still without power in Inhambane.

The heavy rains associated with Freddy and the preceding storms have caused serious damage to 750 kilometres of the road network, according to Public Works Minister Carlos Mesquita. Drawing up a balance sheet on the damage, Mesquita said previously selected contractors have been positioned to work on repairs.

Of particular importance was the Beira-Zimbabwe road (EN6), where traffic was interrupted due to a rise in the level of the Mulondo River in Sofala province. “This was dealt with quickly”, said Mesquita, “and circulation of traffic was restored less than 30 hours after the damage to the road was reported”.

Other roads affected were the stretches from Mopeia to Luabo in Zambezia province, from Nacala-a-Velha to Mema and Moma, in Nampula, and from Malema in Nampula to Cuamba, in Niassa.

Mesquita said that teams from the National Roads Administration (ANE) and various contractors were already working to ensure the resumption of normal flows of traffic along these roads.

### Flood victims call for urgent assistance

Families, who have lost their homes and belongings due to the heavy rainfall of February have called for urgent intervention by the authorities in order to rehouse them. The families in question are residents of Hulene neighbourhood, on the outskirts of Maputo City. As a result of the continuous rainfall, some residences were submerged and others collapsed.

“We are asking for the support of the authorities. The neighbourhood of Hulene is always forgotten. This time we are asking them to look at us. We have nothing, we need help, and we lost everything. We need land at least”, said a victim named Celeste Calisto.

“I tried to make a barrier so that the water would not invade my house. But all the effort was in vain because the rain, with its intensity, brought everything down and flooded every house”, said Eugenio Bila, adding that “the authorities should allocate land to the victims because they have nowhere to go.”

For Salvador Magaia, a victim who witnessed the collapse of a wall of his house, “right now, the government must come up with a solution to help people. Shelter is urgent because we have nowhere to go. The best thing would be the provision of land”.

Although tropical cyclone Freddy has dissipated, rain continued to fall in Maputo on 28 February and 1 March. Matters were made much worse by breaks in the water pipes operated by the government’s Water Supply Investment and Assets Fund (FIPAG).

Some people, however, were hesitant to leave the area for fear that opportunists will invade their homes to steal materials such as doors, windows, zinc sheets, beams, electricity meters and taps. “Before I remove all the materials, I’m not leaving here. There are many thieves who take advantage of the opportunity to take away what little we can still reuse”, said Osvaldo Matos.

There is still no official data about the number of people affected in this neighbourhood, but our report, listening to several sources, points to more than a hundred families, composed especially of women, children and elderly people.

## Railway cut between Maputo and Zimbabwe

The torrential rains in southern Mozambique cut the Limpopo rail linking Zimbabwe to the port of Maputo.

Cited by Radio Mozambique, Adelio Dias, a spokesperson for the publicly owned port and rail company, CFM, said “the Limpopo Line has been inactive since 24 February, and the intensive rainfall is making it difficult to re-establish traffic”.

The Administrator of Chicualacuala district, Cacilda Banze, said that floods have cut several stretches of the railway. This could cause problems for food security because food supplies for Chicualacuala have traditionally arrived by rail.

Further south, the Goba line, linking Maputo to Eswatini, was re-opened on 27 February after a cut due to a mudslide caused by the torrential rains.

## People in Marracuene at risk of hunger

About 8,400 inhabitants relying on agriculture and livestock in the administrative post of Machubo, in the southern district of Marracuene, face hunger due to flooding along the banks of the Incomati River.

These people, according to the daily newspaper “Notícias”, have lost 1,150 hectares of crops. “We have lost rice, sugar cane, sweet potato and cassava. This reality will hamper the food security of the community”, said Angelica Nhambe, one of the victims.

According to Nhambe, this situation will also worsen the financial situation of many families who depend entirely on agriculture. “We live through agriculture, especially sweet potatoes. When we sell our products, for example, we can afford to meet our children’s school expenses, as well as buy food and hygiene products. But the flood took everything”, she said.

Francisco Mabui, another victim, says that he lost everything although he had “planted a variety of crops, such as maize and sweet potatoes. Right now, we cannot talk about these products. They’re all gone”.

## Seven charged over mandrax factory

The Central Office for the Fight against Organised and Transnational Crime (GCCCOT) has announced it is charging seven people with drug trafficking in connection with a factory producing the illicit drug mandrax which was dismantled by police in June 2022.

The seven were caught red-handed in a house in Infulene, a neighbourhood in the southern city of Matola. According to a report in the newsheet “Carta de Mocambique” on 27 February, the seven were members of a criminal group dedicated to the production, storage and sale of drugs.

Five of the accused are Mozambican citizens. The GCCCOT statement did not give the nationality of the other two. They are charged with drug trafficking, the undue use of equipment, materials and precursors, money laundering and criminal conspiracy.

According to the GCCCOT, the group trafficked drugs between Mozambique and other countries, notably South Africa.

They used the money from this illicit trade to acquire vehicles, houses, and other properties. The prosecutors have seized nine luxury houses in up-market neighbourhoods of Maputo and Matola, 27 vehicles, seven trailers, one motorboat, two jet skis, four motorcycles, and 134 refrigerators, as well as assorted equipment used to produce the mandrax.

The Central Asset Recovery Office is continuing to investigate the finances of the seven suspects. The charges against the seven have been sent to the Maputo Provincial Court, which will set the date for a trial.

## Vietnamese citizen jailed for wildlife crimes

The Maputo City Law Court on 23 February sentenced a Vietnamese citizen to 16 years imprisonment for trafficking in wildlife products, including rhinoceros horns, and lion claws and teeth. According to a note from the National Administration of Conservation Areas (ANAC), the Vietnamese citizen (whose name ANAC did not give) intended to smuggle these goods out of the country via Maputo International Airport.

He attracted the attention of police at the airport, and a sniffer dog of the ANAC canine unit detected the presence of the rhino and lion parts.

“The prevention and fight against crimes against biodiversity in Mozambique has achieved notable results due to the coordination between the institutions of criminal investigation and the organs of the administration of justice in close collaboration with our partners”, said the ANAC release.

Founded in 2011, ANAC is a State institution responsible for the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable development of ecotourism in Mozambique.

## One dead in gold mine collapse

One man died on 22 February when an illegal gold mine collapsed at Machipanda, in the central province of Manica. The 23-year-old man, named only as Danimo, received fatal injuries inside the mine where he and three others were digging. One of the eyewitnesses, Marco Ndapiwa, told AIM that Danimo and his colleagues were inside the mine when it was raining. He said the heavy rain caused the mine to collapse.

Danimo was taken by his colleagues to the nearest health unit. He was then transferred to Chimoio provincial hospital, where he died.

This part of Manica is rich in gold and other minerals, which act as a magnet drawing people from across central Mozambique and the neighbouring countries, particularly Zimbabwe, in search of their fortune. But illegal mining is highly dangerous, and mine shafts are often dug without observing any safety measures. Last year, there were ten deaths in mine collapses in Manica district (where Machipanda is located).

To avoid further loss of life the government’s mineral resource sector, in collaboration with the local community and religious leaderships, has been undertaking awareness and training campaigns about the safety measures that should be observed during informal mining.

## District elections: Renamo to appeal

Mozambique's main opposition party, Renamo, is to appeal against the decision of the country's parliament, the Assembly of the Republic, to remove from its agenda for the current parliamentary sitting two Renamo bills to pave the way for elections to district assemblies in 2024. "We have a jurisdictional council, we have meetings of party cadres, and we have a political commission who are currently analysing profoundly what legal alternatives Renamo will take", the rapporteur of the Renamo parliamentary group, Venancio Mondlane, told reporters at a press conference in Maputo on 24 February.

At Renamo's insistence, district elections were included in the decentralisation package agreed between the government and Renamo in 2019. Amendments to the constitution on decentralisation were passed, including a commitment to hold district elections in 2024. But the Constitution says nothing about what powers district assemblies will have, how much they will cost, or how many members will sit in them.

In 2022, President Filipe Nyusi called for a nationwide reflection on the feasibility of holding district elections. This infuriated Renamo: as the Constitution states that district elections will be held in 2024, then they must be held in that year, Renamo argues. The two bills it submitted would provide the necessary legal framework.

Mondlane stressed that, under the Constitution, Renamo has every right to appeal against the removal of its bills from the parliamentary agenda. "If Renamo were to stop this struggle, that would mean agreeing with a retreat into monarchy", Mondlane claimed. "All the struggle waged by Renamo over about four decades seeks to bring full democracy to Mozambicans".

It was the Assembly's governing board, its Standing Commission, which removed the Renamo bills from the agenda. But Mondlane said that, in reality, the decision had been taken by the ruling Frelimo Party, which has an absolute majority on the Standing Commission.

The Renamo bills, Mondlane said, are the basis for district elections to take place. "If we don't have a legal basis, the elections are not viable", he pointed out.

District elections, he claimed, are the result of "Renamo's struggle to return power to people, a struggle which should culminate in decentralisation. This is the agreement that President Filipe Nyusi reached with the late President of Renamo, Afonso Dhlakama". Frelimo's position in parliament, Mondlane accused, "is a clear sign that there is no interest in maintaining the spirit that led to the signing of the agreement between the two Presidents".

Presumably, Mondlane was referring to the peace agreement signed in August 2019 between President Nyusi and Dhlakama's successor, Ossufo Momade. That agreement has never been published so we do not know what, if anything, it said about district assemblies. Yet Mondlane declared that "the basis for the entire process of reconciliation and peace lies in the agreement to hold district elections".

## Terrorists captured in Mocimboa da Praia

The Mozambican defence and security forces and their Rwandan allies have captured more than a dozen Islamist terrorists in the district of Mocimboa da Praia, in the northern province of Cabo Delgado, according to a report in the newsheet "Mediafax" on 24 February.

Seven terrorists were captured on 20 February by Rwandan troops near the village of Malinde. According to local sources, cited by the paper, the seven were caught at a hideout in the bush. A group of local fishermen gave the Rwandans directions to the hideout.

The Rwandans captured a further ten terrorists after what was described as "an intensive exchange of fire" in the bush between the villages of Makulo, Cabecera and Malinde. These jihadists had supposedly told local villagers that they were willing to surrender, but when they saw that they were surrounded, they opted to fight instead. During these clashes, the residents of the nearby villages fled to the district capital, Mocimboa da Praia.

On 23 February, the Mozambican defence forces presented to reporters in Mocimboa da Praia town three terrorists who had abandoned jihadist camps and surrendered to the authorities.

According to a report in the newsheet "Carta de Mocimboa", the commander of the army, Tiago Nampole, said the terrorists had surrendered due to various operations carried out by the defence and security forces.

The three terrorists, named as Abdremane Issa (31), Nze Assumane (45) and Buanamade Ali (30), said they had operated across the northern part of Cabo Delgado, participating in attacks against villages in Mocimboa da Praia, Palma, Nangade, Muidumbe and Macomia.

## Government to revive coastal shipping

Prime Minister Adriano Maleiane on 17 February swore into office Unaite Mustafa, as the new chairperson of the Institute of Maritime Transport (Itransmar) with the task of reviving coastal shipping. Maleiane said the government had set up Itransmar in order to encourage the development of maritime, river, and lake transport, capitalising on Mozambique's geo-strategic location and its immense potential in the maritime area.

Through the creation of Itransmar, the government intends to guarantee greater and better supervision, regulation, monitoring and inspection of maritime, lake and river transport. Maleiane urged the new chairperson "to propose measures that induce the transporters of merchandise to include this model of transport as an economically viable option".

At the same event, Maleiane swore Dinis Vilanculo into office as chairperson of the state publishing company, the National Press of Mozambique (INM). Maleiane said Vilanculo would be managing a complex sector which is facing challenges resulting from the digitalisation now underway. "We recommend that you continue to modernise this institution", he urged.

He added that Vilanculo should publicise the services provided by the INM and improve its mechanisms of interaction with other state bodies and the private sector.

## 37 deaths from cholera

37 people have died of cholera in Mozambique since the start of the current outbreak last December, according to Health Minister Armindo Tiago, cited in the newsheet "Mediafax" on 23 February. To date, the number of cases diagnosed is 5,260, mostly in the northern province of Niassa. But cases have also been detected in the central provinces of Tete, Zambezia and Sofala and the southern province of Gaza.

Speaking on 22 February at a meeting in Maputo to assess the cholera and polio situation in the country, led by the World Health Organisation (WHO), Tiago said "surveillance is underway in all districts of the country to ensure early detection of cholera and implementation of control measures".

To break the chain of contamination, the Minister added, a vaccination campaign against cholera will be held in the four provinces where the situation is regarded as of most concern. The campaign will be run in eight districts – Sanga, Lago, Lichinga, Mecanhelas and Mandimba in Niassa; Milange in Zambezia; Caia in Sofala and Xai-Xai in Gaza. The campaign will last five days and will cover the entire population aged one year and above. The Health Ministry calculates that this will be a total of 719,240 individuals.

As for polio, Tiago said that in 2022 the country had notified 932 cases, compared with 473 in 2021. "Of the 932 cases notified, 33 were positive for polio, and eight were of the wild polio type (PSV1), identified in Tete".

Last year, six rounds of vaccination against polio were carried out, and three more rounds are planned for this year, throughout the country.

Regional WHO Director Matshidiso Moeti told the meeting "the good news is that no case of polio has been notified in the last 150 days".

## Lengthy prison terms for murderers of albino

The Nampula Provincial Court on 22 February sentenced five individuals to prison terms of up to 30 years for the murder of an albino citizen, whose body parts they had intended to sell.

According to the report of the trial in the Maputo daily "Noticias", Dinis Sebastiao and Edson Eduardo were sentenced to 30 years, and three others, Argentino Eusebia, Alves Cabral and Calisto Francisco, all of whom were relatives of the victim, to 24 years.

Dinis Sebastiao was found to have organised the murder. He and his accomplices were found guilty of first-degree murder, criminal conspiracy and the possession of human body parts. Among the aggravating factors, according to the judge, were premeditation and cruelty.

The five admitted to cutting up the body of the murdered albino and selling his arms for six million meticaais (US\$94,000) to an unnamed foreign citizen in Murrupula district.

The judge regarded the men's confession as only partial since they refused to reveal any details about the purchaser of the body parts. In addition to the prison

sentence, the murderers must each pay 300,000 meticaais as compensation to the relatives of the albino.

Superstitions in parts of Mozambique and the neighbouring countries hold that the body parts of albinos are supposedly imbued with magical qualities, and when used in black magic rituals will bring riches, power and good luck.

## President Nyusi speaks on "silencing the guns"

President Filipe Nyusi on 17 February shared the experience of Mozambique in negotiating for peace at a high-level panel in Addis Ababa, on the theme "Silencing the Guns in Africa: the Experience of Mozambique".

The meeting was co-organised by Mozambique, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the African Union Commission, and the British academic institution Chatham House.

President Nyusi's main message was the importance of dialogue for achieving peace. "Using dialogue, we were able to amend the Constitution through parliamentary unanimity, to allow the deepening of decentralisation by introducing provincial elections", he said.

The President stated that decentralisation, and the need to avoid the existence of an armed party sitting in parliament, were the two issues solved through dialogue. Through dialogue, it was possible to sign a memorandum of understanding about military matters in 2018. This was the prelude to the Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) of the Renamo militia under the General Peace Agreement signed by President Nyusi and Renamo leader Ossufo Momade in August 2019.

President Nyusi said that, to date, about 4,800 Renamo militiamen have been demobilised out of an estimated total of 5,200. "We are working so that this year we shall close the final Renamo military base, and shall put our major stress on reintegration and national reconciliation, including institutionalising pensions", added President Nyusi.

The final base, located in Gorongosa district, in the central province of Sofala, should have been closed in December. But the Renamo leadership failed to attend the planned ceremony, largely because the issue of pensions was still unsolved. Renamo claimed that the payment of pensions to its former guerrillas is covered by the August 2019 agreement. The government says there is nothing about pensions in that document, and since the agreement has never been published, it is difficult to say who is telling the truth.

President Nyusi told the Addis Ababa gathering that peace is an unfinished process "and so, it should be continually nourished through political tolerance, reconciliation and inclusion".

"Another aspect we regard as crucial in attaining peace was that we kept the dialogue discreet, away from the spotlight, and so honest between the parties involved", added President Nyusi.

## Training is military priority for 2023

Defence Minister Cristovao Chume on 20 February announced that the training of troops is the priority for 2023. Speaking at the opening of the operational year in Namacunde, the capital of Muidumbe district in the northern province of Cabo Delgado, Chume said “the training of the Mozambican armed forces (FADM) should be permanent and continual, to respond to the dynamic character of the threats. This year it should be the main agenda of our military units”.

After his speech, Chume addressed the Local Forces – a militia that fights alongside the FADM and often includes veterans of Mozambique’s war for independence from Portuguese colonial rule. He reiterated that they too will be included in the military plan of action for Cabo Delgado.

“The government has approved the law which says the Local Forces will answer to the Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces, which would be responsible for providing them with training, uniforms and weapons”, said Chume.

Addressing the civilian population of Muidumbe, he urged them to denounce any aggression, drunkenness or other lack of discipline committed by members of the FADM. The soldiers, Chume stressed, “have an obligation to treat you well. If you find a soldier drinking, please inform his commander. If you find a soldier beating up civilians, also give us the information. We shall arrest him and send him away”.

Muidumbe is one of the districts severely affected by Islamist terrorism, but the FADM and its allies from Rwanda and SAMIM (SADC Military Mission in Mozambique) have re-established government control over most of the district.

According to statistics from the district administration, about 54,000 people displaced by terrorist violence, have returned to their homes, and 17 schools in Muidumbe are now operational.

## Galp pulling out of Mozambican gas

The Portuguese fuel company Galp is selling its holdings in the Mozambican natural gas industry, according to a report in the daily “O Pais” on 17 February.

According to Portuguese media reports, Galp plans to pull out of oil and gas production in Africa altogether. After selling its Mozambican assets, Galp may also leave Namibia and Sao Tome.

It is thought that there will be no difficulty in selling the Galp holding in Coral Sul. This asset will attract other investors because of the increased appetite in Europe for LNG, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The Coral Sul project is the first floating gas liquefaction plant in ultra-deep waters anywhere in the world. The gas is extracted at a depth of about 2,000 metres in Area Four of the Rovuma Basin, off the coast of Cabo Delgado province. It will produce 3.4 million tonnes of LNG a year. The first export of LNG by Coral Sul took place in November 2022.

Galp has a 10 per cent share in Area Four of the Rovuma Basin. The Area 4 license holders include Mozambique Rovuma Venture (MRV) S.p.A. which is a Joint Venture co-owned by the Italian energy company, Eni, ExxonMobil and CNODC of China, with a 70 per cent participating interest, Mozambique’s own National Hydrocarbon Company (ENH with a 10 per cent participating interest) and KOGAS of South Korea (10 per cent).

This week, Galp signed an agreement with the Angolan company Somoil to sell all its upstream assets in Angola for US\$830 million.

Galp has not yet said how much it expects to earn from the sale of its Mozambican assets.

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This is a condensed version of the AIM daily news service - for details contact [pfauvet@live.com](mailto:pfauvet@live.com)

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