

Mozambique News Agency

AIM Reports

Report no.638, 24th July 2023



Unity is “fundamental condition” for victory, says President Nyusi

President Filipe Nyusi, in his capacity as President of the ruling Frelimo Party, on 20 July called on all Frelimo members to show a spirit of cohesion and unity as a fundamental condition for victory in the municipal elections scheduled for 11 October.

Speaking in the northern city of Nampula, at a ceremony where Frelimo’s mayoral candidates for the 65 municipalities were publicly displayed, President Nyusi declared “In the coming three months, let us work together for victory”.

The President told the candidates they had the duty to do better than their predecessors. “I shall resort to the principle which guides Mozambican families – which is to fight so that the sons are better than the parents, and the grandsons better than the sons”, President Nyusi said.

He noted that the candidates find themselves in an environment of stability and economic growth, which should favour good performance in the elections.

Municipal citizens, he stressed, “have great expectations for better provision of public services”. Many of the mayoral candidates are young “and represent a new generation”. Should they be elected, President Nyusi expected from them “more open, modern, and transparent municipal management which meets the dynamics of the evolution of society”.

He warned the candidates that they are not standing as individuals but as candidates of Frelimo. “Let it be clear that Frelimo is running you as candidates so that you can serve the Mozambican people through the manifestos and perspectives of Frelimo. Nobody on their own can replace Frelimo. And nobody will be an independent mayor when he stood for Frelimo and won at the cost of Frelimo”.

According to President Nyusi, Frelimo’s victory is already being built, through the unity and cohesion generated within the harmonious and democratic environment in which the inner-party elections took place. “Once again, we are showing that we are a mature political force, better prepared and organised to lead the destinies of the nation at all levels”, he declared.

He urged the candidates, if elected, to defend the national interest, and act inclusively. They should not discriminate against anyone, he insisted.

They should have “a strategic vision”, he added, and be capable of anticipating future changes, and establishing realistic targets for local progress. They should inspire and mobilise citizens, motivate their working teams, and always keep in communication with local partners.

“Remember that today you are still Frelimo candidates, you are not yet mayors”, concluded President Nyusi. “To become a mayor, you need to work”.

Ten per cent of tax revenues from mining to support communities

Mozambique will allocate 10 per cent of tax revenues from mining and hydrocarbon production to structuring projects in the provinces and to supporting local communities.

According to a decree approved by the Council of Ministers (Cabinet), 7.25 per cent of the revenue collected from the Mining Production Tax and the Petroleum Production Tax will be allocated to the provinces and districts, “for structuring projects”, and 2.75 per cent for “local communities.”

“The criteria for allocating and managing the percentage of revenues earmarked for the development of provinces, districts and local communities where mining and hydrocarbon projects are being implemented need to be regulated”, reads the document.

By “structuring projects”, the Mozambican government means “those that boost the productive sector, aiming at the collective development of a given region under the responsibility of the provincial authorities”. This could cover technical and professional education, agriculture, including production support infrastructures, dams and irrigation, land use planning, roads, bridges and electrification, water and sanitation, among others.

The financing of projects designed and selected to support local communities must result from the coordination of the Local Advisory Council, “according to principles of transparency, participation, and relevance to the District Development Plan”.

Mozambique expects to receive US\$96 billion in revenue over the lifetime of natural gas production from the Rovuma basin, off the coast of the northern province of Cabo Delgado, which is almost seven times the country’s annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, Islamist terrorist attacks that have struck much of Cabo Delgado have put major investments on hold.

Irish aid for reintegration of Renamo fighters

The Irish Foreign and Defence Minister, Micheal Martin, on 21 July announced the grant of a further million euros (US\$1.1 million) to support the reintegration into Mozambican society of former militiamen of the country's main opposition party, Renamo. This raises Ireland's total contribution, from 2017 to the present, to €5 million. Reintegration is the final part of the DDR (Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration) programme agreed between the Mozambican government and Renamo.

Martin, who was on an official visit to Mozambique, visited an exhibition in Maputo organised by Mirko Manzoni, personal envoy to Mozambique of United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, where he praised the progress made in building peace, including the conclusion in June of the phase of demobilising and disarming what is referred to as Renamo's "residual force".

According to Martin, "This is a significant mark in the advance towards sustainable peace in Mozambique".

Martin also met with Foreign Minister Veronica Macamo. The purpose of this meeting, he said, was "to celebrate the robustness and perseverance of the excellent relations between Ireland and Mozambique".

In announcing the new grant, Martin declared "The first heroes of any peace process are those who show the courage to change direction and trace out new paths".

He congratulated both President Filipe Nyusi and Renamo leader Ossufo Momade "for their commitment to the peace process and their courage in transforming the peace agreement into concrete results for Mozambicans".

Martin compared the Mozambican peace process with the Good Friday agreement signed 25 years ago, which ended decades of violence in Northern Ireland. This was a "triumph of constitutional democracy on our island".

Ireland remains committed to working with Mozambique, he said, financially, technically, and with key diplomatic staff, in supporting "initiatives for inclusive reconciliation, which have human rights and gender equality at their heart".

On 19 July, Martin announced the grant of another million euros to the southern province of Inhambane for employment, health, and water supply, and €3.5 million to strengthen educational systems and boost access to education.

In total, Ireland has granted aid of €27 million to Mozambique this year.

Businessman kidnapped in Maputo

Unknown assailants on 20 July kidnapped another Mozambican businessman of Asian origin, according to a report in the newsheet "Mediafax". The victim, Manuel Jasvantilal, also known as Manojo, is the owner of a bottle store, located on the corner between Amilcar Cabral and Eduardo Mondlane Avenues, in the heart of Maputo.

According to eyewitnesses, Jasvantilal was kidnapped minutes after leaving his shop. Two armed men jumped out of a vehicle and forced him to leave his own car and enter theirs. They then sped off, taking him to an unknown destination.

The police have not yet made any public statement about this latest kidnapping. It is not known whether the kidnapers have contacted the victim's family to demand a ransom.

New General Secretary for journalists' union

On 20 July, Faruco Sadique was elected General Secretary of the National Union of Journalists (SNJ), with 36 votes, corresponding to 55.4 per cent of the delegates. The election took place in Mafambisse district, in the central province of Sofala,

Far from being a trade union militant, Sadique was previously chairperson of the board of Radio Mozambique, and then chairperson of the board of the publicly owned television company, TVM. He is now head of the Maputo office of the Beira-based daily "Diario de Mocambique".

The conference to elect a new leadership was long overdue. The previous General Secretary, Eduardo Constantino, was at the head of the SNJ for 19 years. There should have been fresh elections ten years ago, but these were constantly postponed on the grounds that the SNJ had no money to hold a conference.

There were two other candidates for the post. One of them, Delfina Mugabe, is a former journalist on the Maputo daily "Noticias" and was a member of Constantino's executive running the SNJ.

Mugabe narrowly won the first round of voting, with 30 votes to 29 for Sadique. The third candidate, Alexandre Chiure, is a member of the watchdog body, the Higher Mass Media Council (CSCS), elected with the support of the Mozambican chapter of the regional press freedom body, MISA (Media Institute of Southern Africa). Chiure took six votes, and since no candidate had over 50 per cent, there was a second round, won by Sadique with 36 votes to 29 for Mugabe.

Sadique recognised that the SNJ is in a very poor state and is no longer seen by journalists as representing them. In his election manifesto, he said that "in recent years, the SNJ has become an entity that is foreign to journalists", who increasingly "do not see themselves reflected in their own union".

Most journalists, Sadique said, have stopped paying their membership dues, except for those in the public sector whose dues are discounted directly from their wages.

Sadique said he wants to establish "a transparent system of accountability for the financial resources and other assets of the SNJ".

Interviewed by the newsheet "Carta de Mocambique" before the conference, Sadique said that, if elected, his top priority would be to transform the SNJ into an organisation in which the members can see themselves.

President Nyusi calls for increased agricultural production

President Filipe Nyusi has called for a move towards mechanised farming to generate greater income for households. He has argued that to boost agricultural production farmers must move away from reliance on short-handled hoes and embrace mechanisation.

President Nyusi expressed this view on 20 July in Macate district, in the central province of Manica, during the launch of an agricultural mechanisation course at the Marera Agrarian Institute.

“Embrace this area and work to increase agricultural production and household incomes”, he urged. “We want to migrate from short-handled hoes to mechanised farming. This is the only way to fight the poverty and hunger that still affect our communities”.

According to President Nyusi, the Marera Agrarian Institute will receive trainees from the Chigodore Institute, the Chimoio Agrarian Institute (IAC), both in Manica province and the Caia Agrarian Mid-level Institute, in the neighbouring province of Sofala.

In its first phase, the Institute will teach three courses: agriculture, agrarian extension, and carpentry. The courses will benefit trainers from four institutes in the provinces of Manica and Sofala. Other short and long courses will be taught in the future. The short courses cover beekeeping, poultry, carpentry, construction, and needlework, as well as food processing.

The Marera Agrarian Institute is dedicated to the training of mid-level technicians in agriculture and associated areas. It has a laboratory with modern equipment, classrooms, dormitories, offices for administrative services, and a water supply system, among other facilities.

“Our producers expect a lot from you. They want to learn how to produce more and get out of poverty. We, as a government, will continue to redouble our efforts to provide more means and back mechanised agriculture to increase production”, President Nyusi said.

The President also urged the trainees to demonstrate greater commitment and dedication so that the knowledge acquired is replicated in the communities.

This educational establishment has been operating since 2016 when it was upgraded to the status of an Agrarian Institute. It had previously operated as the Marera Agrarian School. The rehabilitation and equipping of the infrastructure is the result of the intervention of the Mozambican government and partners such as the German development bank, KfW.

Since 2016, the institute has graduated 151 students in various specialisms. It currently houses more than 200 trainees.

Work on Gurue water treatment station almost completed

Prime Minister Adriano Maleiane on 20 July pledged that the work on rehabilitating and expanding the Water Treatment Station (ETA) in Gurue, in the central

province of Zambezia, will soon be completed.

During a visit to Gurue ETA, Prime Minister Maleiane expressed satisfaction with the rehabilitation. The work is budgeted at about 270 million meticaís (US\$4.2 million), financed entirely by the Mozambican state budget.

The residents of Gurue district, the Prime Minister continued, will have safe drinking water in their homes due to the effort made by the government which is seeking to provide water to all Mozambican communities.

The Prime Minister had gone to the ETA, he said, because he was aware that, “apart from other, normal problems, this was the problem for the population of Gurue”. He pledged that, shortly, water will flow from Gurue taps 24 hours a day.

The critical areas of the Gurue ETA, Prime Minister Maleiane said, include limitations on the management and treatment of the volume of water, which he linked to the population density of the district. The total population of Gurue is put at around 200,000.

With the new ETA, the Prime Minister added, the distribution of water to citizens’ homes will be stabilised.

“The contractor has already promised that we shall have the system operational within a few days”, he said.

On 20 July, Prime Minister Maleiane began a five-day working visit to Zambezia, as part of the government’s monitoring of the implementation of the 2023 Economic and Social Plan. He is also reviewing activities underway to repair the social and economic fabric of the province, badly damaged by recent extreme climate events, notably tropical cyclone Freddy, which hit Zambezia in mid-March.

Judge arrested on suspicion of corruption

Mozambique’s Central Office for the Fight Against Corruption (GCCC) has arrested a judge of the Maputo Provincial Court, in the city of Matola, on suspicion of corruption.

The judge, who has not been named, was found in possession of 20,000 meticaís (US\$312), which was believed to be a bribe.

The country’s anti-corruption watchdog was tipped off about unlawful monetary charges within the court by a high-ranking judge in exchange for favours in a case before the court.

The Judge was caught red-handed with the sum, according to a report carried by the television station, STV.

A press release issued by the GCCC stated that there is very strong evidence of offences such as bribery and malfeasance.

This is a condensed version of the AIM daily news service - for details contact pfauvet@live.com

AGRA to fund nearly two million smallholder farmers

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), a farmer-centred partnership, will disburse nearly US\$28 million to support about two million Mozambican smallholder farmers over the next five years.

The announcement was made on 18 July in Maputo by AGRA's country Representative, Paulo Mole, at the official launch of its strategy for Mozambique (2023-2027). Mole explained that the initiative will improve the living standards of the smallholders, especially young people who will be funded and assisted so that their activities can pay off.

"Empowering youths so that they can set up their own initiatives and also employ others in agriculture is one of the goals of the present strategy," Mole said, adding that the plan attaches new aspects such as resilience to climate change, nutrition, and seeds in a bid to ensure a qualitative rise in production.

The African-led institution attaches priority to crops such as maize, soybeans, cassava, and rice but, in order to support the smallholders' livelihoods, it also intends to play a role in vegetable production.

The smallholders, Mole pointed out, will also receive capacity building in practices that enrich and fertilise the soils as well as using improved seeds, turning agriculture into an income-generating activity.

AGRA, which operates in the Beira Corridor and the Zambezi Valley, in the country's central region, intends to extend its activities to the Pemba-Lichinga Corridor, in northern Mozambique. With further support from its partners, the strategy will eventually reach the Limpopo and Maputo Corridors in the south.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Darcia Nhancale, said coordinated efforts in partnership with AGRA has made it possible to train 2,275 rural entrepreneurs, reaching more than 874,000 smallholders. Under the partnership, 32 input wholesalers as well as 1,758 input retailers received assistance, making it much easier to sell several products through structured markets.

US\$23.5 million a year needed to feed prisoners

The Mozambican state spends about 1.5 billion meticaís per year (US\$23.5 million) to feed prisoners nationwide.

According to the national director of Penitentiary Inspection, Yazalde Viana de Sousa, interviewed by Radio Mocambique, "feeding prisoners costs about 150 meticaís per day. Consumption of food per prisoner per month costs about 4,200 meticaís and about 50 thousand meticaís per year. For all prisoners, we spend about 1.5 billion meticaís".

De Sousa revealed that the inmate population in prisons in Mozambique is about 23,098, of whom 683 are women. He pointed out that over the last three years, the inmate population has grown. "In 2020, we had a population of about 18,000 inmates, in 2021 we had about 20,517 inmates, in 2022 about 21,000, and in 2023

we have about 23,000 inmates. The population grows year after year", he said.

Manica Regional Penitentiary, in the centre of the country, leads the national statistics with 3,294 inmates, followed by Nampula, in the north, with about 1,800 inmates.

Despite the growing number of inmates, De Sousa considered the prison situation in Mozambique as calm and controlled, characterised by the absence of incidents. "There is no record of harmful strikes in prisons, disputes or insurgency, a situation that would modify the order and discipline in the functioning of penitentiaries", he claimed.

He revealed that to make the prison system sustainable, in order to reduce its dependence on the State, the sector has drawn up a socio-economic development programme for the National Penitentiary Service that will serve as a guideline in the economic component of prisons.

Renamo fails to ban dissidents from elections

Mozambique's National Elections Commission (CNE) on 19 July defeated an attempt by the main opposition party, Renamo, to deny a party formed by Renamo dissidents the right to stand in the municipal elections scheduled for 11 October.

The new party, Democratic Revolution (RD), was formed by Renamo members who opposed the leadership of Renamo President Ossufo Momade.

Renamo demanded that the RD should not be registered to participate in the elections because its emblem uses pictures of the first Renamo commander, Andre Matsangaissa, and his successor, Afonso Dhlakama. Parties which register with the CNE are not allowed to use names, acronyms or emblems which might be confused with those of any other party.

The CNE members appointed by the ruling Frelimo Party say that in reality there is no similarity between the Renamo and RD emblems. The Renamo emblem consists of a partridge, ten yellow stars, and three arrows arranged horizontally from left to right, while the emblem of the RD is a blue square on a white background, which shows pictures of Matsangaissa in the lower left-hand corner and of Dhlakama in the upper right-hand corner. In other words, Renamo does not use pictures of its founding leaders on its emblem.

The CNE discussed the matter on 17 July when it did not approve the registration of the RD. Instead, it called for both parties to be heard by the CNE about their emblems. A vote was taken on 19 July with seven members of the CNE voting in favour of registering the RD with four against and two blank ballots.

Renamo says it will now appeal to the Constitutional Council, the highest body in matters of constitutional and electoral law. According to the anti-corruption NGO, the Centre for Public Integrity (CIP), the Justice Ministry has issued an opinion supporting the Renamo argument. If the CNE accepts that opinion, there will be no need to appeal to the Constitutional Council.

Globelec to acquire majority stake in Mocuba solar power plant

London-based power producer Globelec (an institution formed by Norwegian and British funds) on 18 July announced that it has reached an agreement to buy Scatec's 53.5 per cent stake in the Mocuba Solar Power Plant in the central Mozambican province of Zambezia.

In addition, it will buy the 22.5 per cent stake belonging to the Norwegian Investment Fund, Norfund.

This will give it a 75 per cent stake in the 41-megawatt project with the remaining share held by Mozambique's publicly-owned electricity company, EDM.

The Mocuba power plant is located on 126 hectares in a rural setting approximately 13 kilometres from the city of Mocuba. The project reached financial close in March 2018 with construction completed in August 2019.

EDM has a 25-year power purchase agreement in place, with the electricity being fed into the national grid. This guarantee enabled funding for the project to be provided by the International Finance Corporation and the Emerging Africa Infrastructure Fund.

Globelec is a major player in the energy market development in Mozambique. Currently, the company is in the process of commissioning the Cuamba Solar Photovoltaic Project, a 19-megawatt peak facility in the northern province of Niassa. This project will also include Mozambique's first grid-scale battery storage system, with a capacity to store two megawatts (seven megawatt-hours).

It is also undertaking the construction of the Temane Power Project (CTT), a 450-megawatt gas-powered facility in the southern province of Inhambane. Once operational, the project will be the largest power station built in Mozambique since its independence in 1975.

In addition, Globelec is leading the development of the Namaacha wind project, a 120-megawatt facility located near the border with South Africa.

Mike Scholey, the company's chief executive, expressed satisfaction with Globelec's expansion in Mozambique. He stressed, "I am very pleased that Globelec is continuing to build its presence in Mozambique through the purchase of the Mocuba solar plant. This acquisition, alongside our other projects, demonstrates our commitment both to Mozambique and to building our renewable power portfolio in Africa".

The Mocuba transaction is subject to regulatory and lender approval and is expected to be completed in the first half of 2024.

Syrah Resources pauses graphite production

The Australian mining company Syrah Resources on 18 July announced that in May and June, it paused production of graphite at its mine in Balama district, in the northern Mozambican province of Cabo Delgado due to volatile Chinese anode market conditions and high inventories.

According to the company's quarterly announcement to the Australian Stock Exchange, production will restart when new sales orders are agreed allowing for the

production of at least 10 kilotonnes per month at prices above operating production costs.

The company adds that robust global electric vehicle production and sales growth is expected to result in high demand for locally processed Active Anode Material in North America, and is "ultimately expected to require significantly higher imported natural graphite into China and emerging anode supply hubs". However, Syrah warns that "the short-term volatility of China customer demand remains challenging".

As a result of the production pause, Syrah mined just 15 kilotonnes of graphite in the second quarter of 2023 compared with 41 kilotonnes in the first quarter.

Syrah is also working on signing a second binding offtake agreement with Tesla Inc, the US-based multinational company that manufactures electric cars and battery storage. It is progressing with the construction of its automotive battery component plant in Vidalia, in the United States. In the fourth quarter of 2023, the factory will begin producing up to 11.25 kilotonnes per annum of Active Anode Material. It has carried out a feasibility study on expanding the factory to 45 kilotonnes per annum which "confirms the project is technically viable, financially robust and expected to generate significant value for Syrah". The Final Investment Decision for this expansion is expected to take place later this year.

The Balama graphite mine covers 106 square kilometres and is reported to hold the largest graphite reserves ever discovered. It is an open-cast mine and Syrah estimates the lifespan of the resource at more than fifty years. The mine was officially inaugurated by Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi in April 2018 although graphite mining began in November 2017.

Graphite is a highly valued form of carbon due to its properties as a conductor of electricity. It is used in batteries and fuel cells and is the basis for the "miracle material" graphene, which is the strongest material ever measured.

Plans to end of export of unprocessed minerals

Mozambique is to review legislation on the mining sector by the end of this year to end the export of unprocessed minerals. According to the Minister of Industry and Trade, Silvino Moreno, cited in the daily newspaper "Noticias" on 17 July, "our mining projects, almost all of them, export raw materials. We want to change this". Speaking on the sidelines of the Business Summit between Africa and the United States, Moreno pointed to the projects on titanium-bearing heavy sands in Chibuto, in the southern province of Gaza and Moma, in the northern Province of Nampula. "These projects should be transforming the raw material for the printing industry", he said.

Therefore, he added, the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy are mapping products to be covered by the proposed measure. He emphasised that "all mineral products should only be exported after being processed".

Extraordinary assembly sitting fixed for August

The Mozambican parliament, the Assembly of the Republic, announced in Maputo on 18 July that it will hold an extraordinary sitting from 3 to 7 August, mainly to eliminate from the country's Constitution any date for the first elections to district assemblies.

When a set of constitutional amendments on decentralisation was approved in 2018, it included a commitment to hold district elections in 2024. But nobody knew what powers the district assemblies would have, or how to avoid overlaps with the existing district and municipal assemblies.

Last year, President Filipe Nyusi called for a nationwide reflection on whether it would be desirable or feasible to hold district elections in 2024. A commission on the matter concluded that it would not.

The parliamentary group of the ruling Frelimo Party is now proposing a constitutional amendment that would remove the 2024 date, and merely state that the district elections will be held "when conditions allow".

The main opposition party, Renamo, seems to have accepted that nationwide district elections cannot be held in 2024. Nonetheless, it has suggested that elections be held in at least some districts in that year.

The spokesperson for the Assembly's governing board, its Standing Commission, Alberto Matukutuko, told reporters that the extraordinary sitting will also discuss a bill on setting up a Sovereign Wealth Fund, a bill on the organisation and functioning of the municipalities, and amendments to the Labour Law.

Meanwhile, the Assembly has found that it is not immune to the financial crisis hitting the Mozambican state. This month the Assembly was unable to pay on time the rent and transport allowances owing to parliamentary deputies. These allowances should be paid until the fifth of each month. But the July allowances were paid almost ten days late.

It was the Frelimo parliamentary group which first raised the issue. It received a reply from the Assembly administration that "due to the lack of liquidity, there is a delay in paying the July rent and transport allowances. The amount will be deposited in the bank accounts as soon as the situation is normalised".

The amounts involved are substantial. The basic monthly rent allowance for a deputy is 24,645 meticaís (US\$400), and the monthly transport allowance is 45,000 meticaís. Deputies who serve on parliamentary commissions receive larger allowances.

PGR publishes names of alleged terrorists

The Mozambican Attorney-General's office has published the names of 43 alleged terrorists and three organisations involved in the Islamist raids in the northern province of Cabo Delgado.

The names are listed in the official government gazette, the "Boletim da Republica", dated 12 July.

The most prominent figure named is Bonomade Machude Omar, who operates with six *noms-de-guerre* (namely Omar Saide, Ibin Omar, Sheik Omar, Nuro Saide, Abu Surakha and Abu Sulayfa Muhammed).

The PGR says that Bonomade Omar was born in Ncumbi village in the Cabo Delgado district of Palma. He is described as "the main coordinator of the attacks in Mozambique", and is also a link between the Mozambican jihadists and the outside world.

In August 2021, the US State Department designated him as a "Global Terrorist", and in April this year, the European Union put him on its list of individuals subject to sanctions because of his "responsibility for terrorist attacks and human rights abuses".

Among the terrorist groups named by the PGR is Ansar al-Sunna. Since late 2019 this has been part of the self-styled EIPAC (Islamic State of the Province of Central Africa), also known as IS-CAP, Central Africa Wilayah or Wilayah Wasat Ifriqiya.

According to the PGR, this group is financed by smuggling, and by religious networks of people traffickers used by the group to send recruits to Tanzania, Kenya and Somalia.

Ansar al-Sunna was founded in Cabo Delgado by followers of the late Kenyan fundamentalist cleric, Abou Rogo Mohammed. This is the group which, under the name ISIS-Mozambique was designated as a terrorist organization by the US State Department.

A second group is EI-PAC, the Portuguese acronym for the Islamic State of Central Africa. It has been present in Mozambique since September 2020 and took credit for the jihadist occupation of the town of Mocimboa da Praia. The difference between this group and Ansar al-Sunna is far from clear.

The third group named is the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), set up in the wake of the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, and notorious for atrocities committed in Iraq and Syria. ISIL has supported Ansar al-Sunna since 2019. This support is credited with improving the level of organisation and strategy of the Cabo Delgado jihadists and obtaining more weapons from them.

From this brief sketch, it seems that, despite the different names, the groups mentioned by the PGR are all part of the same organisation.

Wild animals kill ten in Mutarara

Ten people have died in Mutarara district, in the central province of Tete, as a result of human-wildlife conflict during the first half of the current year. Of this number, eight were attacked by crocodiles and two by hippos.

According to the director of the Economic Activities Services in Mutarara, Diaca Quizene, cited by Radio Mocambique, a total of 12 attacks by crocodiles and three by hippos were recorded, in addition to eight devastations of areas of cultivation of various crops.

Diaca Quizene said a large number of attacks occurred in Nhamayabue administrative post, along the Zambezi River and on islands in the same river. "Here the people are more concentrated and another factor that we cannot rule out is the cultural habit of people wanting to wash their clothes in the river", he explained.

"This happens during the agricultural season when producers farm on the islands", he explained, adding that "several measures have been taken to minimise the situation, including killing dangerous animals".

Feasibility study for Greater Maputo Urban Mobility to cost US\$3 million

The Transport Ministry has awarded a consortium of two companies the contract to carry out a feasibility study for the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) urban mobility project, to be implemented in the Greater Maputo Metropolitan Area. The contract is worth US\$3 million.

The Greater Maputo Metropolitan Area covers Maputo, the adjacent city of Matola and the neighbouring districts of Boane and Marracuene. The feasibility study is part of the US\$250 million budget made available by the World Bank as a grant to improve urban mobility in the Greater Maputo area.

The Ministry of Transport, implementing the project through the Maputo Metropolitan Agency (AMM), believes that the complexity of the work requires a thorough study involving engineers and technicians from various areas to calculate the real costs of the project.

For this purpose, the project was awarded to two companies, namely the Dutch consultancy firm Royal Haskoning HHV, and Integrated Transport Planning, which is based in South Africa.

According to the coordinator of the BRT project, Fatima Artur, in an interview with the daily newspaper "O Pais", the companies have already been on the ground since last May and should, in 12 months, complete the feasibility study which will include, in addition to the feasibility of the central lanes, the outline of multi-purpose signalling systems that will be controlled from a data centre, 10 intermodal terminals, and security cameras on buses and terminals.

"This is a detailed study and because of that it will take a year and there is a team of consultants working on it. Right now, we have estimates of the construction cost of the project. The consultancy will provide the real costs", explained Fatima Artur.

This is the first Bus Rapid Transit solution in the country and will be implemented on a 22-kilometre section of a line dedicated to the BRT buses, leaving from Workers' Square in downtown Maputo City, passing through Guerra Popular, Acordos de Lusaka and Julius Nyerere avenues.

International reserves falling but still above threshold

Mozambique's international reserves have fallen since 2021 but still cover 4.3 months of estimated import needs, which is above the recommended threshold, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

"Gross international reserves cover almost 4.3 months of imports, which is above the commonly recommended minimum buffer", says an IMF report released on 14 July on the final approval of the review of the Extended Credit Facility (ECF) for Mozambique.

It adds that Mozambique's international reserves have "fallen since the beginning of 2021" and reached US\$2.9 billion at the end of last year, "covering 4.3 months of projected imports of goods and services not related to mega-projects in 2023".

The IMF recognises the impact of high costs of fuel imports on international reserves. "At the same time, imports not related to mega-projects have increased significantly in the last two years, further reducing the import coverage of reserves", the document says.

The announcement of the IMF's approval of the revision to the ECF was made on 6 July, guaranteeing a disbursement of US\$60.6 million to Mozambique. In the note that accompanied the announcement of the second review of the program approved in May 2022, which brings the total amount already received by Mozambique to US\$212.09 million, the IMF says it allowed the non-observation of two criteria: the primary budget balance at the end of last year and the accumulation of external debts by the public sector.

In its macroeconomic forecasts for this year, the IMF predicts an acceleration of Mozambique's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth from 4.2 per cent in 2022 to seven per cent this year, anticipating that by the end of the year, the rate of inflation will have fallen from 10.3 per cent to 6.7 per cent, the same as in 2021, but still almost double the previous two years.

The debt-to-GDP ratio is expected to maintain its downward trajectory and reach 89.7 per cent at the end of this year, improving from 95.5 per cent of GDP last year.