

# Mozambique News Agency

## AIM Reports

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## President Nyusi confirms death of terrorist leader

President Filipe Nyusi on 25 August confirmed the death of Bonomade Machude Omar, the leader of the islamist terrorist group, known locally as “Al-Shabaab”. The President stressed that his death, along with other senior members of the group, is the result of the continued pursuit of extremists in the northern province of Cabo Delgado where they are continuing to operate in small groups.

According to the President, the elimination of Omar, who was killed in a military operation carried out by the Mozambican Armed Forces (FADM), does not mean the end of the conflict, given the complexity of the terrorist phenomenon.

“However, significant progress had been made by the Defence and Security Forces, with the support of partners such as the SADC Military Mission for Mozambique (SAMIM) and the Rwandan Defence Forces, which culminated in the recovery over the last two years of all the district capitals and towns once occupied by the terrorists”, President Nyusi said.

According to the Chief of Staff of the Mozambican Armed Forces (FADM), Joaquim Mangrassa, who made the initial announcement, “From the investigation carried out, we have verified, with factual evidence, that the main leader who has directed operations since the outbreak of terrorism in Mozambique, named as Bonomade Machude, also as Ibn Omar, and as Abu Suraka, has been killed”.

Omar has often been described as the brains behind the jihadist raids and is said to define all targets and the necessary operational logistics.

In recent days other senior figures in the terrorist gang have died. On 23 August, FADM announced the death of Abu Kital, the second-in-command to Omar. In addition, Ali Mahando, who is described as a senior official has also been killed.

Meanwhile, on 28 August the newssheet “Mediafax” reported that a 51-year-old Burundian citizen, Laser Makumbi, was captured in Nanjaua village, in the district of Ancuabe, by members of the peasant militia known as the Naparama.

When interrogated by the police, he said he only speaks English. He said he left Burundi for Mozambique under a contract to fight alongside the jihadists. The report describes him as a sniper, who had been fighting with the terrorists for the past four years.

## INGD prepares strategies to mitigate El Nino effects

Mozambique’s relief agency, the National Disaster Management Institute (INGD), is working on strategies to mitigate the effects of the El Nino climate phenomenon, which is expected to cause severe drought in southern Mozambique.

According to INGD chairperson Luisa Meque, speaking on 31 August at a meeting of the INGD Coordinating Council, held in the southern district of Matutuine, the design of the contingency plan is still dependent on the climate forecast, which in principle will be known in September.

“The INGD has decided to position itself on the ground to anticipate risky phenomena. The information available indicates that the coming period could be characterised by severe and prolonged droughts, compromising agricultural production, a situation that could undermine food and nutritional security in the most vulnerable areas”, Meque said.

She added that the Coordinating Council aims to discuss aspects linked to the institution’s improved intervention in times of emergency.

“With regard to El Nino, we, as an institution, have been working for a month and a half and we already have some anticipated actions in the southern provinces, which are the ones that are going to suffer the most. We know that El Nino is a slow-progressing event and we’re bringing forward the intervention”, she said.

Meque acknowledged that the country is moving into the next rainy season with constraints in terms of conclusively surveying and repairing the damage from climatic disasters during the previous season, which claimed more than 300 lives and affected more than 1.3 million people, leaving behind a desolate trail of destruction of public and private infrastructure, including flooded homes and farmland.

## **President highlights factors undermining growth**

President Filipe Nyusi believes that high-interest rates, climate change, low industrialisation and terrorism are the main factors conditioning the growth of developing countries, especially African countries.

According to the President, who was speaking on 24 August in Johannesburg at the 15<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit, although there are signs of an improvement there are still negative factors that undermine the speed of growth, such as the persistence of inflation, “and this reality implies an increase in debt servicing and a fall in reserves with consequences for currency depreciation”.

“The situation is exacerbated by the rise in interest rates in creditor countries, which has resulted in higher financing costs for African countries”, he said.

The President said that Africa makes an insignificant contribution to carbon emissions and is inhabited by millions of people who still don't have access to energy. Nonetheless, Africa suffers from the effects of climate change. “Unfortunately, African countries are victims of tropical cyclones and recurrent droughts, which have an impact on agricultural production, employment for young people, the quality of people's lives and the displacement of millions of people”, the President said.

Therefore, he added, there is an urgent need to adopt an energy transition that allows the economic potential of African countries with developing energy resources to be capitalised on, which will undoubtedly play a fundamental role in global energy security in the coming decades.

President Nyusi also pointed to industrialisation through the consolidation of regional value chains for various products, based on the building of infrastructures that connect the African continent to boost the continental free trade zone.

“The processing of our countries' strategic agricultural and mineral products is important, combining the resources of various countries for gains in economies of scale and access to energy under viable conditions, where Mozambique should play an important role given the potential of its energy matrix and strategic geographical location”, he said.

However, President Nyusi warns that the desired development will only be possible with peace and stability. For this reason, there is an urgent need to combat terrorism and maritime piracy in multilateral forums with the active participation of the least developed countries in line with the dictates of international law and without the influence of geopolitical rivalry.

President Nyusi welcomed the BRICS initiative for a new development bank that should reduce the infrastructure deficit on the African continent.

“We welcome the fact that it favours the financing of vital economic and social infrastructures, highlighting the concrete need for roads and bridges, schools and hospitals, dams and other water retention and management systems, among others”, he said.

BRICS is made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Russian President Vladimir Putin did not attend in person since the International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued a warrant for his arrest for war crimes.

The number of BRICS members is set to increase to 11 from 1 January next year with the inclusion of Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

## **Mozambique and Ghana Condemn Military Coups**

In a joint press conference held in Maputo, President Filipe Nyusi of Mozambique and his Ghanaian counterpart, Nana Akufo-Addo, who was on a three-day visit to Mozambique, denounced recent military coups that have taken place in West and Central Africa.

Both leaders emphasised that military takeovers are not a viable solution to the developmental challenges facing Africa. President Nyusi called for a thorough investigation into the root causes of these coups, cautioning against hasty conclusions.

Akufo-Addo echoed these sentiments, stating, “Military coups are not the solution to the problems of our continent”, he said. “We have to find the best ways of governing ourselves, and these are not through military intervention”.

Highlighting that military coups are not a novel phenomenon, Akufo-Addo mentioned that Ghana itself has experienced coups in the past, making it clear that military intervention is not a solution to their problems.

Both Presidents implored media professionals to play a pivotal role in fostering a culture that deters military takeovers.

The most recent coup occurred in Gabon, where soldiers took control on August 31, alleging that President Ali Bongo had stolen the presidential election held on August 26. However, some independent analysts believe that the incumbent president had legitimately won.

The Gabonese junta is treading a path followed in recent years by the military in Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Guinea.

President Nyusi expressed Mozambique's interest in learning from Ghana's experiences in defence and security matters. He particularly highlighted Ghana's Council of Peace, which brings together all segments of society to prevent conflicts.

Moreover, President Nyusi expressed hope for collaboration with Ghana in combating piracy, an area in which Ghana has considerable expertise.

On 1 September, Mozambique and Ghana signed agreements encompassing political and diplomatic consultations, municipal development, fisheries and aquaculture, as well as geology and mining.

President Nyusi commended Ghana's exemplary progress in democracy and the fight against corruption, adding that “transparency is a battle that is being won in Ghana, and we shall work to see what we can do together”.

## President calls for improved crime fighting

President Filipe Nyusi on 30 August urged the new Minister of the Interior, Pascoal Ronda, to improve the strategies for fighting against terrorism and organised crime, particularly in the wake of the recent wave of kidnappings of businesspeople.

Speaking in Maputo, at the ceremony where he swore Ronda into office, President Nyusi said he expected the Minister to follow the principles of “humanism, humility, transparency and tolerance”.

The Interior Minister, he insisted, “must always be on the side of the citizen, and on the side of the police, which is the reason why the Ministry of the Interior exists”.

The Minister must experience “the day-to-day life of the police, their problems, and also celebrate their successes”, President Nyusi added.

He listed the main challenges facing the police as “the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, organised crime including kidnappings, the fight against money laundering, cybercrime and environmental crimes, the modernisation of SERNIC [the National Criminal Investigation Service], and the relentless fight against road accidents”.

In a brief interview with the press, Ronda said “It’s up to us as the Ministry of the Interior to implement the lines established in the field of training and in the field of preventing and combating organised and transnational crime”.

He said that corruption in the police must be fought “relentlessly” as it is “unforgivable”. During the course of his work, he added, he will evaluate the performance of officials in order to take the measures necessary to achieve the central objectives of the Ministry.

Ronda stressed that he will fight terrorism and kidnappings more vigorously. “You can expect improvements so that we can move forward more forcefully”, he said.

President Nyusi had declared that those in leadership positions should not be afraid to make decisions nor should they fear their subordinates. Ronda made it clear that he had been trained to be fearless, and promised to do everything to ensure the circulation of people and goods without hesitation or fear.

Ronda had been a senior police officer in the 1990s, and the then President, Joaquim Chissano, appointed him General Commander of the police, a post he left in 2001. “Wherever I went, I was never afraid”, he said. “We achieved above-average results, and here too we are going to work”.

Ronda succeeded Arsenia Massingue, who held the post for a period of one year and nine months.

## Renamo still attempting to ban dissidents

Mozambique’s main opposition party, Renamo, is still trying to keep Democratic Revolution (RD), a party formed by Renamo dissidents, off the ballot paper for the municipal elections scheduled for 11 October.

Renamo claims that the RD has not yet obeyed an instruction from the Constitutional Council, the highest body in matters of constitutional and electoral law, to change its symbol.

The RD symbol includes portraits of the first commander of Renamo, Andre Matsangaissa, and his successor, Afonso Dhlakama. The Constitutional Council ruled that the symbol risked confusing voters, who might cast their ballots for the RD in the belief that they were voting for Renamo.

Cited in the newsheet “Mediafax” on 4 September, the Deputy Chairperson of the National Elections Commission (CNE), appointed by Renamo, Fernando Mazanga, stated that the RD has not yet changed the offending symbol.

A new RD symbol, which does not contain images of any Renamo leaders, has circulated widely on social media, though it has apparently not yet been approved by the Constitutional Council.

When the CNE met on 2 September it voted in favour of allowing the RD to stand in the elections. The vote was on party political lines – those CNE members appointed by, or supportive of the ruling Frelimo Party – voted to allow the RD to stand. Those appointed by Renamo and by the second opposition party, the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM) voted against it.

The CNE says that the RD has guaranteed that its symbols will be changed “in the next two days”.

The RD wanted to stand in ten of the 65 municipalities, but it failed to provide the legally necessary documentation for its candidates in half of these municipalities. The CNE thus approved RD candidates in only five municipalities.

On the Constitutional Council’s instructions, the CNE drew lots once again for positions on the ballot paper, to include the RD’s name.

This made little difference. Because they are the only parties standing in all 65 municipalities, Frelimo, Renamo and the MDM occupy the top three slots on the ballot paper. The MDM remains in first place, Renamo edges up from third to second place, while Frelimo falls back from second to third place.

Minor parties, some of whom are only standing in a couple of municipalities, occupy the rest of the ballot paper. The RD’s name was drawn for the bottom position.

## Health workers suspend strike

The Association of United Mozambican Health Professionals (APSUSM) on 27 August suspended strike action until 5 November.

The Association’s chairperson, Anselmo Muchave, cited by the television station STV, said this would allow time for dialogue with the government’s new negotiating team, headed by Prime Minister Adriano Maleiane.

Doctors, represented by the Mozambican Medical Association (AMM), returned to work on 24 August.

## LAM reduces debt by over US\$61 million

The publicly-owned company Mozambique Airlines (LAM) has reduced its debt by around US\$61.6 million in the last quarter, following various actions carried out by Fly Modern Ark (FMA), the South African consultant hired to revive the airline.

According to the LAM restructuring project manager, Sergio Matos, who revealed the figure on 29 August in Maputo, “this is the result of the correct posting of transactions in accordance with International Accounting Standards. The Generally Acceptable Accounting Practices (GAAP) and National Treasury Accounting Guidelines reduces the debt position”.

In the last three months, Matos said, there has been a reduction calculated at around US\$14.3 million. Added to the previous US\$47.3 million announced on 29 May, this brings the total debt reduction to US\$61.6 million.

“LAM is now technically solvent”, Matos stressed.

According to Matos, FMA is now working to recover and forward to LAM’s coffers a sum in excess of US\$20 million to purchase an aircraft.

“Negotiations are underway with Boeing for the reimbursement of US\$23 million, an amount that LAM made in advance for the purchase of Boeings in the past but which then didn’t happen”, he said. “We are now in negotiations to recover this sum, and when this amount is reimbursed, it will further reduce the debt”.

LAM has also established new routes, including Maputo-Lusaka, and has reintroduced the Vilankulos-Johannesburg and Beira-Johannesburg routes.

In addition, LAM has re-established inter-provincial routes from the city of Beira that allow “passengers who want to go to Cabo Delgado or Nampula [...] to leave from Beira to the provinces of the centre and north”. The results of this will determine whether or not a similar line is created from Nampula to other parts of the country.

Three more aircraft have been added to the LAM fleet. “When Fly Modern Ark started to operate, LAM had seven aircraft and only five were fully operational”, said Matos. “Now, three more have been added and all of them are operational, which means we have ten aircraft fully operational”, he said. The three aircraft added to the fleet are two CRJ900 and an Embraer 145.

The government, he explained, has a programme contract that was signed with LAM to cover the unprofitable routes (Maputo/Xai-Xai/Maputo, Maputo/Chimoio/Maputo and Maputo/Lichinga/Maputo) and these amounts were recorded as debt.

“There was also an injection of liquidity during the Covid-19 pandemic to support the company and this was also recognised as debt. What we did was contact these institutions and they gave us supporting documents to prove that it wasn’t a debt”, he added.

Asked if LAM had been mismanaged, Matos said he couldn’t say for sure. He only argued that FMA had brought pragmatism to management, because “the people are the same and the competence is the same”.

## Triton Minerals granted mining concession

The Australian mining company Triton Minerals, which holds the rights to graphite deposits in the northern Mozambican province of Cabo Delgado, on 30 August announced that the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources has granted it a 25-year mining concession for the Cobra Plains graphite deposit.

According to an announcement to the Australian Securities Exchange, the granting of the mining concession comes after a period of ongoing consultation with the government of Mozambique.

It points out that although it had previously held an exploration licence for Cobra Plains, the result of this consultation is the grant of the far more advanced and valuable mining concession, “confirming Triton’s excellent relationship with the Mozambique authorities and adding scale to Triton’s portfolio of graphite projects in Mozambique”.

Commenting on the development, Triton’s Executive Director Andrew Frazer notes that “the grant of the Cobra Plains mining concession, with its large scale 5.7 million tonnes of graphite, means that Triton now owns two globally significant graphite resources with a diversified mix of flake sizes which can be applied towards a range of applications from batteries to expandable graphite for building materials”.

The company’s flagship project is the Ancuabe Graphite project and it is continuing to seek funding for development. However, it also notes that its Nicanda Hill license has been earmarked for public tender despite Triton’s efforts to have the licence renewed and it has appealed to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources to review this decision.

Cobra Plains is ten kilometres away from the Balama graphite mine operated by Syrah Resources and 230 kilometres away from the port of Pemba. The Balama mine covers 106 square kilometres and is reported to hold the largest graphite reserves ever discovered.

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, with vast potential for use in the electronics industries.

## SERNIC arrests three for poaching

Mozambique’s National Criminal Investigation Service (SERNIC) has arrested three people in the northern province of Niassa for the capture and sale of pangolins.

The pangolin is one of the species most under threat from poaching in Mozambique. SERNIC spokesperson in Niassa, Mirza Manguanda, told reporters that the poachers were charging prospective buyers 250,000 meticaís (US\$4,000) for a live pangolin.

“They were caught in Majune district. The detention took place in collaboration with the inspection team of the Niassa Special Reserve. This year, this is the first time that Niassa has reported a case of the sale of pangolins”, she said.

## Port of Beira expects to double container capacity

The central port of Beira expects to double the annual volume of cargo handled from 300,000 containers to around 700,000. According to the Director of Operations of the private company Cornelder de Mocambique, which operates the port, Miguel de Jenga, the increase will be achieved due to the ongoing project to modernise and expand the port system.

The installation of the new devices, he said, will make it easier to handle cargo at night.

“More than 200 high-tech cameras are currently being installed to monitor port operations and respond to demand. The modernisation and expansion process has become a nerve centre for maritime navigation on the continent”, Jenga said.

According to him, this step is being taken at a time when international logistics specialist Unifeeder has just added the Port of Beira to its Mozambique-India-Jebel Ali service to boost trade and connectivity.

The new network transports containers to and from Maputo, Jebel Ali (Dubai), Mundra (India), Nhava Sheva (India), Mombasa (Kenya), Beira and Maputo.

Jenga stressed that Beira is a strategic port that plays a crucial role in connecting landlocked countries such as Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi to global trade.

“Its strategic location and efficient infrastructure make it a key hub for trade in the region”, he said.

## Sixth shipping line to operate out of Beira

Cornelder de Mocambique has announced that a sixth shipping line is now operating out of the port.

According to a press release issued by the company on 4 September, Ocean Network Express (ONE), which is represented in Mozambique by Manica Freight Services, began operating on 31 August when ONE’s ship, the Penang Bridge, docked in Beira.

ONE has a space-sharing agreement with the international logistics experts Unifeeder, which in mid-August added Beira to its Mozambique-India-Jebel Ali service. Under this agreement, ONE will also transport Unifeeder containers to Beira in its fortnightly Beira to Maputo/Mombasa/India/Middle East route.

According to the Operations Director of Cornelder Mozambique, Miguel de Jenga, the addition of the ONE shipping line will bring a diversity of choices for importers and exporters using the Beira Corridor which covers the centre of Mozambique and hinterland countries. He added that there will be economic gains for exporters and importers due to “competitiveness between the shipping lines”.

Ahmad Ali Haffejee, the Director of Manica Freight Services in Beira, which is the agent for ONE, said he was pleased that ONE, which is already operating at the Port of Maputo, would now also operate out of Beira.

He added, “Cornelder de Mocambique is making major investments in the Port of Beira. This pleases us and benefits us all”.

ONE - Ocean Network Express will be the sixth shipping line to operate in the Port of Beira, joining MSC, PIL, MAERSK, CMA-CGM and Gold Star Line (GSL).

Ocean Network Express is the sixth-largest shipping line in the world with a market share of 6.6 per cent. It was founded in 2017 as a merger of the biggest Japanese shipowners: K Line (Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha), MOL (Mitsui O.S.K. Lines), and NYK (Nippon Yusen Kabushiki Kaisha). It has a fleet of over 220 vessels, with a large number of Very Large Container Ships (10,000 to 20,000 TEU) and Ultra Large Container Ships with a capacity greater than 20,000 TEU.

## New management system for Beira Container Terminal

Cornelder de Mocambique, the private company that operates the port of Beira in central Mozambique, has announced that it is introducing a new management system to improve the handling of refrigerated containers, known as “reefers”, in the container terminal.

According to a press release issued by the company on 31 August, Cornelder de Mocambique will work in partnership with Identec Solutions to implement from October a new and modern management system called Reefer Runner.

Part of this will involve the installation of 300 power sockets known as reefer plugs for the refrigerated containers.

Luis Rodriguez, the Head of the Container Terminal, explained that the improvements aim to reduce costs and meet the immediate needs of customers. For this, “a reliable, fast, and fully documented handling of reefers is important”.

He added that “with the Reefer Runner system, we can monitor the fridges remotely. This is crucial as the number of fridges steadily grows”.

The press release notes that “by enabling automated 24/7 monitoring of all individual refrigerated containers, Reefer Runner protects all refrigerated cargo, transmits vital data, and triggers alarms when necessary. This technology facilitates more efficient reefer management, significantly improving the process of importing and exporting reefer cargo at the terminal and minimising complaints”.

The installation of this system covers two bonded warehouses, an International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) storage area and a state-of-the-art Navis N4 computerised management system.

The recent expansion includes more container storage space and a new five-lane access road, solidifying Beira’s role as an important logistics centre in the region.

This strengthens Cornelder’s claim that the Beira Port Container Terminal is “one of the most modern terminals in southern Africa”.

## UNICEF faces huge funding shortfall

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has warned that it has only received 22 per cent of the funding needed for its operations in Mozambique.

In its humanitarian situation report published on 23 August, UNICEF points out that it has only received US\$19 million for its US\$169 million appeal "to sustain life-saving services for nearly 2.5 million children and families in Mozambique affected by multiple shocks, including those affected by conflict in northern Mozambique, Cyclone Freddy, and the cholera outbreak".

To supplement these funds, UNICEF is using US\$17.5 million carried over from last year. However, this still leaves a 77.8 per cent funding gap.

This comes at a time when the needs in Mozambique are growing. UNICEF warns of the intensification of the conflict in the northern province of Cabo Delgado (which has been plagued by Islamist terrorism since 2017) which has "resulted in the movement of over 7,600 people in July, of whom half are children".

UNICEF also warns that research by the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWSNET) at the end of July indicated that food security in areas in the centre of the country hit by Cyclone Freddy has deteriorated due to the impact of the cyclone at harvest time. UNICEF states, "Poor households are likely engaging in coping strategies to minimise food consumption gaps following a poor/failed harvest and limited access to income (livelihoods)".

In addition, UNICEF highlights its concern about the high price of the staple food maize which is 20 to 66 per cent above average "due in part to delayed harvests and crop losses during the 2022/2023 agricultural season".

Looking to the future, UNICEF points out that according to the National Institute of Meteorology, there is a greater than 90 per cent chance of an El Nino occurrence during the next rainy season. El Nino conditions typically lead to irregular and deficient rainfall in the south and centre of the country and excessive rainfall in northern areas.

UNICEF notes that "in July, there were more than 23 consecutive days without significant rainfall and the majority of the country recorded below normal vegetation coverage".

Funding for UNICEF's work in Mozambique has been received from the governments of Canada, Japan, the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Norway, Ireland, South Korea, Sweden, the European Union, and the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

## UNHCR notes return of internally displaced people

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has noted the return of 420,000 internally displaced people to their areas of origin in Mozambique over recent months.

In its monthly situation report, UNHCR states that almost 900,000 people remain internally displaced due to violence by Islamist terrorism and "the devastating impact of the climate crisis".

On the climate crisis, it highlights that Mozambique is "one of the most adversely affected countries in the world" and that "the double landfall of Tropical Cyclone Freddy in February and March 2023, a year following the devastating Tropical Cyclone Gombe, affected over one million people, destroyed infrastructure, and displaced some 184,000 people". On top of this, according to UNHCR, the country is also host to 30,000 refugees and asylum seekers.

The UN organisation has been working with partners and the Mozambican government to provide life-saving protection services and assistance to refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced people, returnees, and host communities. However, as of 20 July it had only received US\$19.3 million out of its annual budget for Mozambique of US\$47.5 million.

In terms of needs, the worst affected area is in the northern province of Cabo Delgado which has been plagued by terrorism since 2017. UNHCR notes that 834,304 people are still internally displaced in northern Mozambique, with 65 per cent of those living in host communities with the remainder living in relocation centres. Therefore, there is also a need for support for those host communities so that they do not have to bear the burden of the displacements.

## HCB records production of 8,013.6 GWh over the last six months

Hidroelectrica de Cahora Bassa (HCB), the company that operates the Cahora Bassa dam on the Zambezi River, in the western province of Tete, in the first six months of this year produced 8,013.6 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of electricity, a figure that exceeds the half-year production plan by 14.8 per cent and is an increase of 0.6 per cent compared to the same period in 2022.

According to a note from the company, "At the same time, HCB has added to its portfolio the prospect of realising short and medium-term energy production projects through alternative sources, with an emphasis on the construction of a photovoltaic plant of up to 400 megawatts".

In the long term, the statement adds, "the company is conducting strategic reflections with a view to reactivating the Cahora Bassa Norte [hydroelectric power station] project, to meet the growing energy demand in Mozambique and the region, in the face of the ongoing crisis". This refers to plans for a second power station at the dam, on the north bank of the river.

With regard to available water resources, the company ended the first half of 2023 with storage at 92.5 per cent of its useful volume, corresponding to the water surface level in the reservoir of 324.5 metres above the average sea level, and "this seems satisfactory to guarantee the budgeted production by the end of the year, estimated at 14,291.6 GWh".

## President Nyusi impressed by Indonesian ban on exporting unprocessed minerals

President Filipe Nyusi has expressed how he is impressed by the approach taken by Indonesia for the local transformation of raw materials to create jobs and maximise the benefits to the economy.

President Nyusi was speaking on 23 August after a tete-a-tete meeting with his Indonesian counterpart, Joko Widodo, who was on a two day working visit to Mozambique.

During their meeting, the two presidents reviewed material linked to defence and security, the fight against terrorism, climate change, post-cyclone reconstruction, and the need to waive entry visas to allow easier circulation of people and goods.

In a press conference, President Nyusi remarked “The President of Indonesia told me that he has banned the export of raw materials. The minerals are no longer exported unprocessed. They are mined and processed there. We think it’s an experiment to capitalise on. Of course, it will take time, but we’ll get there”.

President Nyusi added that among the minerals that can no longer be exported unprocessed are nickel, bauxite and copper, and 48 processing units have been set up. Mozambique, he said, “could adopt similar policies, given the high potential of its natural resources, notably in the oil and gas, agriculture and energy sectors, which could encourage the development of value chains with a multiplier effect on the economy”.

This vision, President Nyusi added, is based on a programme aimed at boosting industrialisation by attracting investment and increasing industrial competitiveness, under the National Program for Industrialisation of Mozambique (PRONAI).

President Nyusi announced that a task force has been set up to pave the way for cooperation in concrete areas of economic development with mutual gains.

“This task force will have to discuss sectors such as industrialisation because it has become clear that their experience could be important for industrialising Mozambique”, he said. “Also, in the gas sector since Indonesia is taking part in a project of this nature in Sofala. We’re going to take advantage of the presence of Indonesia to discuss textiles and medicines since they also have a lot of experience in these areas”.

For his part, President Widodo said that preparations are currently underway for an Indonesia-Africa Investment Forum to be held next year, which could outline partnerships between Africa and Indonesia over a five-year period, with a particular focus on the electricity, infrastructure and transport sectors.

“Now we’re going to take part in FACIM [Maputo International Trade Fair], and we’ll be able to promote the expansion of investments into the country through our private sector,” assured President Joko Widodo.

During the meeting, the presidents also signed two legal instruments, namely a memorandum of understanding for the control of medicines and biological products and a letter of intent on cooperation in the field of defence and security.

## Analyst expects improving outlook for gas projects

The consultancy firm Business Monitor International (BMI) believes that the outlook for natural gas projects in Mozambique is improving, despite the delay by the French company, TotalEnergies in the northern province of Cabo Delgado.

“The outlook for mega-projects in Mozambique is improving, with progress being made on the resumption of projects. TotalEnergies has taken several steps to restart the project, following the violence in 2021, which forced the company to declare ‘Force Majeure and suspend construction activities’ of the plant that will liquefy the gas, allowing it to be exported”, reads the BMI report regarding the country’s natural gas sector.

According to data unveiled by this consultancy firm, which is owned by the same people as the financial rating agency Fitch Ratings, TotalEnergies should restart work in the first half of next year, after renegotiating contracts with local contractors.

“The final consideration for re-launching the project is to renegotiate costs with local contractors. Since the project was suspended, there have been several large price rises in raw materials, energy and labour, as well as a general increase in inflation, which will decrease the profit margins of the project”, reads the document.

Recently, the CEO of TotalEnergies, Patrick Pouyanne, said that “none of the old gas buyers have exercised their right to leave the project and there is still strong demand even if they do leave”.

“For 2023, we anticipate that gas production in Mozambique will rise 47 per cent to 9.27 bcm [billion cubic metres], up from 6.31 bcm in 2022”, the analyst estimates, stressing that the outlook is for gas production to reach 44.1 bcm in 2032, which has the potential to transform the Mozambican economy not only due to local development but also due to the strong flow of state revenue from these projects.

Mozambique has three development projects approved to exploit the natural gas reserves in the Rovuma basin, classified as among the largest in the world, off the coast of Cabo Delgado. Two of these are large-scale and involve piping gas from the seabed to land before cooling to export it by sea in a liquid state.

One is led by TotalEnergies (Rovuma Basin Area 1 consortium) and work progressed until it was suspended after an attack by Islamist terrorists on the town of Palma in March 2021. That attack led the French energy company to invoke “force majeure” and declare that it would only resume work when the area was safe.

The second large-scale project is led by ExxonMobil and the Italian energy company ENI (Rovuma Basin Area 4 consortium), but the final investment decision has not yet been taken.

A third completed and much smaller project, the Coral FLNG project, also belongs to the Area 4 consortium and consists of a floating platform for capturing and processing gas for export, directly at sea. Exports from this project began in November 2022.

## Visit of Cuban leader opens new page in cooperation

Cooperation between Mozambique and Cuba is expected to expand rapidly in the coming period to cover economic areas where mutual gains can be achieved. This development is the fruit of official talks held in Maputo on 25 August between President Filipe Nyusi and his Cuban counterpart, Miguel Dias-Canel, during the latter's two day visit to the country.

According to President Nyusi, "we want to deepen bilateral cooperation in crucial areas where we have mutual and comparative advantages. We recognise that there is a lot of space for us to explore economic cooperation. To date we have been working together in areas such as health, education and science and technology".

He added that he thought that Mozambican and Cuban businesses could now capitalise on the opportunities offered by agriculture, trade and tourism.

Until now, cooperation has been dominated by health, education, and training within the framework laid down decades ago by Mozambique's first President, Samora Machel, who met with Fidel Castro in the central city of Beira in 1977. President Dias-Canel's visit this week is the first time that a Cuban President has set foot in Mozambique since 1977.

President Nyusi also expressed his solidarity with Cuba against the embargo imposed against the Caribbean island by the United States. He called for the lifting of the embargo to allow Cuba to participate freely in development processes. "This embargo was imposed unjustly and for a very long time. We reiterate our call for it to be removed", he said. "We praise the capacity of resistance shown by the Cuban people during all these years of blockade".

For his part, President Dias-Canel recognised that the time has come to expand relations between Cuba and Mozambique into the economic sphere, given the existing potential.

President Dias-Canel guaranteed that Cuba would continue to support Mozambique in the field of health training and research.

## ADB invest over US\$3 billion over last decade

The African Development Bank (ADB) has invested over US\$3 billion in Mozambique over the last 10 years, consolidating its position as a strategic partner of the government in priority areas, especially in adaptation and resilience to climate change.

The figure was revealed on 29 August in Matutuine district, Maputo Province, by the ADB representative in Mozambique, Cesar Mba Abogo, at the opening of the Coordinating Council of the National Institute for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (INGD).

"The Bank is committed to helping Mozambique build resilience to climate change and extreme weather events. The ADB has been a strategic partner of the government for years", said Abogo.

Abogo noted that the country is very vulnerable to climate change, and to extreme events such as cyclones, floods and droughts, which occur with a frequency and intensity that have a devastating effect.

For this reason, over the last two years, the ADB has disbursed more than US\$42 million to assist populations in arid and semi-arid areas, including the construction of dams, irrigation systems, multi-functional boreholes, and tertiary roads.

"In response to the Mozambican government's request for emergency recovery from the devastating effects of cyclones IDAI and Kenneth in 2019, the Bank disbursed US\$50 million for the livelihoods of the affected communities", he said.

He also said that the ADB extended support to the National Meteorological Institute (INAM) to expand its coverage area with modern infrastructure, including the installation of radars that provide accurate real-time information on meteorological risks.

## Government to farm out N7 highway to private companies

The Mozambican government is considering farming out National Highway N7 to private companies to guarantee routine maintenance on this approximately 500-kilometre stretch of road that links Vanduzi district, in Manica province, to Zobue, in Tete province, on the border with Malawi.

According to the Minister of Public Works, Carlos Mesquita, cited in "Noticias" on 23 August, the current state of the road surface is worrying, with potholes along almost its entire length.

"The N7 is vitally important, as it boosts and catapults the province's economy and is an important link for the countries of the hinterland, which use it to access the Port of Beira, hence the urgent need for rehabilitation to provide better comfort for motorists", he said.

Mesquita guaranteed that while the mobilisation of funds for major work on the entire length of the road is being discussed, the contractors who have been mobilised are working on the most critical sites.

"We have been discussing with our partners to see if we can find the funds to carry out an intervention on the entire length of the N7 and other roads in the country, such as the N1 [the main north-south highway], some of which will later be farmed out to private management", Mesquita said.

At the moment, the government, through the National Roads Administration (ANE), is investing over one billion meticais (US\$15.6 million) for the emergency rehabilitation and periodic maintenance of 151 kilometres between Catandica in Manica and Changara, in Tete.

Mesquita pledged that the work will be completed by the first half of 2024.

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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)



## Researchers identify heavy burden of snakebites

A study published in the academic journal “PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases” has found that snakebites in Mopeia district, in the central Mozambican province of Zambezia, result in about three thousand lost days of work and schooling a year with an economic cost to the victims on average of US\$17.

The researchers calculate that this makes it “almost 5-fold the cost of uncomplicated malaria cases”.

The research was carried out by the Manhica Health Research Centre (CISM) as part of a project funded by the Barcelona Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal). It found that in Mopeia there are 393 snakebites per 100,000 inhabitants per year, impacting two per cent of households.

It found that although most snakebites were on people between the ages of 20 and 25 when taking into account the population profile, the rate of bites per 1,000 is much higher in adults older than 64 (who also have a lower recovery rate).

According to the authors of the report, “snakebite is a neglected disease with a dearth of data and research funding”. They highlight that it was possible to carry out the study by piggy-backing onto a demographic survey conducted in preparation for a malaria cluster-randomised trial, which “enabled us to reveal the burden and identify risk factors of snakebite with minimal disruption or expense to the parent trial team or participants”.

The paper notes that snakebite is a devastating condition that can take away lives and livelihoods, with an estimated 80,000 to 138,000 deaths globally each year.

It suggests that this is a gross underestimate because snakebites take place most frequently in rural settings. In addition, the economic impact of snakebite disproportionately affects the rural poor, and its “associated productivity costs perpetuate the poverty traps in these communities”.

A total of 70,947 people and 13,140 households were included in the study. A total of 272 individuals from 254 different households reported that they were bitten by a snake over the previous 12 months. Of these, five were bitten twice and one was bitten three times bringing the total number of bites to 279. Of those bitten, 77 per cent were envenomated (the others received what is known as a “dry bite” and did not receive venom from the snake). Of all those bitten, over 17 per cent reported not making a full recovery at the time of the survey with four people reporting that they had lost a limb.

The authors note that a surprising result from this study is the lack of reported mortality. They postulate that this is explained by the main source of snakebites in Mopeia: *Bitis arietans* (puff adder) and *Naja mossambica* (Mozambique spitting cobra).

They hypothesise that the higher morbidity seen in those bitten at home is compatible with the presence of Mozambique spitting cobras which are described as “an aggressive species known to enter houses and whose

bites often result in severe injury but not usually rapid death”. In addition, it is thought that some bites could come from *Proatheris superciliaris* (Obscure viper or lowland swamp viper) or *Atractaspis bibronii* (southern stiletto snake).

The advantage of low-cost surveys like this is that they can reveal correlations that could provide clues to the causes of snakebites. For example, this survey found an increased risk of snakebite amongst owners of cats, dogs, and goats which could be the result of animal food and waste attracting rodents which are common prey for snakes. Meanwhile, ownership of pigs, cattle, and poultry was not found to be associated with an increased risk of snakebite – perhaps because they are less likely to roam around the home.

The Manhica Health Research Centre was set up in 1996 to conduct biomedical research in priority areas and is supported by the Government of Mozambique and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID).

## Malaria deaths increase in first half of 2023

At least 210 people died of malaria in Mozambique in the first six months of this year. This is an increase of 22 per cent compared to the same period in 2022.

According to the director of the National Malaria Control Programme (PNCM), Baltazar Candrinho, speaking in Maputo on 21 August during ceremonies marking World Mosquito Day, the provinces most affected by the disease are the central provinces of Zambezia and Sofala and the northern province of Nampula.

“We recorded an increase in deaths of around 22 per cent compared to the same period last year. We recorded around 7.2 million cases of malaria compared to 6.8 million in the same period last year”, Candrinho said.

According to Candrinho, the rise in the number of cases can be explained by the occurrence of natural disasters that the country has suffered in recent times, as well as the poor distribution of protective material.

He said that the upward trend in the number of malaria cases is also associated with other factors, citing as an example the fact that many families received mosquito nets more than two or three years ago.

For this reason, he announced that the health authorities are already working on replenishing materials to protect against mosquito bites, particularly mosquito nets.

“This campaign will begin next week in the provinces of Manica, Tete and Sofala. The distribution of mosquito nets has already been completed in some provinces and the process will end in the southern provinces of Gaza and Inhambane”, he said.

“There are various methods for combating malaria, including mosquito control, mosquito net distribution, indoor spraying and seasonal chemoprevention. Chemoprevention is being introduced in Nampula and consists of administering drugs to a specific group to prevent malaria”, he added.