



Mozambique Country Report March 2023

Mozambique is under attack from an Islamic State (ISIS) insurgency in the northern province of Cabo Delgado. The terrorists are locally known as Al-Shabab, but they have few connections to the Somali terrorists with the same name. The group has carried out beheadings, destroyed schools and hospitals, and abducted children.

Mozambique is still recovering from its 1977-1992 civil war. That war was fought between the Marxist Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) and the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), supported by South Africa. The civil war ended with the Rome General Peace Accords of 1992 brokered by the [Community of Sant'Egidio](#), [Andrea Riccardi](#) and [Matteo Zuppi](#), Bishop [Jaime Gonçalves](#) and the Italian government's Mario Raffaelli. Implementation of the accords was assisted by the UN under resolutions drafted by Genocide Watch's founder, Dr. Gregory Stanton.

The [United Nations Operation in Mozambique](#) (ONUMOZ), authorized by [United Nations Security Council Resolution 882](#), was led by Italian diplomat Aldo Ajello. ONUMOZ disarmed 76,000 fighters, collected 155,000 firearms, helped train 10,000 soldiers of the new Mozambican Armed Forces (FADM) and helped repatriate five million refugees and internally displaced people. ONUMOZ suffered only 26 casualties. The mission cost US \$492.6 million and an additional \$616 million was spent on humanitarian aid. The peace that has followed proves that money spent on peacekeeping is a much better investment than money spent on war.

Mozambique's central government is still dominated by FRELIMO. Mozambique is a centralized polity, leaving the citizens of the provinces with little power. There has been almost no development in the North except for foreign investments in natural gas on the coast of the province of Cabo Delgado. These investments have not [benefited](#) the people of the province. High unemployment within the [economically marginalized](#) Muslim Mwani community helps Al-Shabab recruit terrorists.

Since 2017, over 735,000 residents have fled Cabo Delgado. In June 2022, Al-Shabab terrorists attacked the previously safe district of Ancuabe, displacing nearly 10,000 people. Children constitute more than half of the displaced population. *Save the Children* reports that many schools were [shut down](#), leaving children from the districts of Ancuabe, Chiure, Mecufi, and Meluco without education. Al-Shabab has been kidnapping boys as young as 12 as child soldiers. U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres [announced](#) that U.N. officials would investigate terrorism in Mozambique and include kidnapping of child soldiers in the 2023 U.N. "Children and Armed Conflict" report.

Mozambique's counter-terrorism operations have contributed to the deterioration of the country's human rights situation. Security forces have been accused of [targeting](#) displaced people and intimidating civilians during counter-terrorism operations. Although Mozambique's military has lost ground, the military intervention of Southern African Development Community forces and Rwandan troops have beaten back the Al-Shabab insurgency in northern Mozambique. However, many gains have been wiped out by the massive flooding caused by cyclones in 2022 and 2023.

Genocide Watch recognizes Al-Shabab's forced recruitment of children as a war crime. Mozambique is at **Stage 5: Organization**, **Stage 7: Preparation**, and **Stage 10: Extermination**.

Genocide Watch recommends that:

- Mozambique must refrain from brutal counterinsurgency tactics that would alienate its citizens.
- Mozambique must create a national action plan to address high youth unemployment.
- Mozambique should devote resources to improve infrastructure and provide jobs for the Muslim Mwani community.
- Mozambique and international forces should protect schools and maintain education for displaced children.
- Child soldiers must be treated as victims rather than as perpetrators of violence.