



Resilience to organized crime at the community level

ASSESSMENT MATRIX

MONTEPUEZ

AMÉRICO MALUANA

INTRODUCTION

Since October 2017, Mozambique's Cabo Delgado Province has been the theatre of a destructive insurgency. Communities in the region are caught up in an escalating conflict between the central government and a violent extremist organization (known as al-Shabaab, but unconnected to the eponymous group in Somalia), that seeks to secure increased socio-economic benefits, religious participation and inclusion in the governance of the territories where it has influence. The government, with support from regional allies, has sought unsuccessfully to maintain its control in a province that is geographically, politically and economically remote from the rest of the country.

The people in Cabo Delgado have suffered greatly from the conflict, leading to over 800 000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), mostly headed southward. Additionally, there have been recorded serious human rights abuses, including arbitrary killings and detentions, kidnapping, human trafficking and violence against children (including rape and early marriages) across the province. The local economy has also suffered, thus undermining the already limited socioeconomic opportunities available for the people of Cabo Delgado.

The district of Montepuez is located in the south of Cabo Delgado, 210 kilometres from the provincial capital, Pemba, bordering on the north with the district of Mueda, on the south with Namuno and Chiúre, on the east with Ancuabe and Meluco and on the west with Balama and Mecula, the latter in Niassa Province. Montepuez has been a destination for people displaced by the insurgency. By mid-April 2021, it had already received 10 000 IDPs.¹

Agriculture is a dominant activity in Montepuez. It involves almost all households and is generally practised manually on small family farms. Montepuez also has the world's second-largest reserve of rubies, which was first identified in 2009. A large mining concession controlled by Montepuez Ruby Mining – a joint venture between Mozambican company Mwiriti (25 per cent ownership) and global gemstone-producing giant Gemfields (75 per cent ownership) – covers 33 600 hectares.

The ruby deposits have also caught the attention of the insurgents, who want to extort and then ultimately control mining operations, bringing associated risks of kidnapping, injury and death to mining staff and subcontractors.² GI-TOC's Southern Africa Observatory reports that insurgents have concentrated their recruitment efforts on economically marginalized informal miners and promises of mining-sector work for recruits.³

This analysis is based on over 20 interviews and focus groups conducted in Montepuez, the majority of whom were men. When inviting women to participate in the research, they often declined, saying that they were not interested or that their participation would be irrelevant because they were unaware of the subject. Among the few women who did participate, we noticed a weak understanding of the issues. For instance, those in focus groups often agreed with the responses and perceptions of men. The respondents were from different social groups, including community authorities, elders, religious leaders, women's organizations, municipal police, NGO officers and university students.



PART 1:

THE SITUATION IN THE COMMUNITY

Respondents highlighted the current insurgency as a main manifestation of organized crime in Montepuez. They also identified crimes such as sexual violence, robberies, murders and the burning of houses as critical concerns for security. These crimes are committed by local youth, together with people from other provinces, mainly from Nampula. The respondents' lack of knowledge about organized crime in Montepuez was evident, and they focused mainly on the insurgency. They were unanimous that most insurgents are local youth, frustrated by the lack of employment opportunities and social inequalities in the district.

Criminal markets and organized criminal groups	Respondents: Men	Respondents: Women
What would you define as 'illegal markets' or 'organized criminal activity' in the community?	The respondents had difficulty conceptualizing illegal markets or organized crime. However, they did identify the current insurgency in Cabo Delgado as an activity that falls under the category of organized crime. Criminal activities such as sexual violence, robberies followed by murders, as well as the burning of houses in the north of Montepuez were also identified. 'It is normal to find a dead body. This is nothing new for us in Montepuez. That is no longer a phobia. Nowadays, even a child knows a dead body. [] There are murders here.'	The female respondents' difficulty in defining illegal markets and organized crime was also notable. They consider terrorist activity in Cabo Delgado to be organized crime, as the perpetrators carry out that activity intentionally, which suggests that they come together to plan each action. Respondents reported robbery as the most common illegal activity in Montepuez,
What types of groups would you consider criminal groups in your community? What illegal activity do they do?	Respondents held that criminal groups are made up of local and international citizens. In some operations, these local criminal groups associate with young people from other places, such as Nampula, Pemba and Cuamba (Niassa). It is also possible to find young people from Mali, Somalia and Tanzania.	The general idea is that there are criminal groups comprised of youth from Montepuez, Pemba and other districts and provinces. Sometimes criminal groups operate in coordination with transnational groups.
	Respondents do not rule out the possibility that local criminal groups and the insurgents that operate locally are both linked to transnational groups, pointing to the ease with which local groups access weapons. Poverty and the lack of employment are the main reasons identified as leading young people to organized crime.	
Is the activity considered illegal by community members? Is there a parallel legal trade? Is it socially acceptable? Is there local demand, or is your area primarily a transit area?	The circulation of stolen cars, minerals and other illegal products is common. The activity is considered illegal, and communities are aware of its existence. Montepuez has served more as a transit area.	Respondents argue that it depends on the region. People who live in the village are relatively aware and easily identify illegal activities, while for those who live in rural areas illegal activities can pass unnoticed.



Criminal markets and organized criminal groups	Respondents: Men	Respondents: Women
How easily can groups access weapons? Do gang members carry arms openly? What kinds of arms do groups use: knives, handguns, automatic weapons or small arms?	The respondents said that the groups have easy access to weapons, but they don't carry them openly. They tend to use knives, machetes, hammers and guns.	Criminal groups do not carry guns openly because they are aware that the activity is illegal.
Is a particular age/gender/ethno-linguistic group affected more than others?	One respondent said that men were the main target at the beginning of the insurgency: 'The insurgents only wanted to kill men; women were left.' Over time, insurgents began to attack everyone, regardless of gender, age, religion or ethnicity.	Women are the ones who suffer the most, particularly those who study in the evening. They are subject to rape. People who are economically stable in Montepuez are also vulnerable to robbery, mainly those who sell ore.
Is there a livelihood (or other) benefit from engaging in the criminal market?	Respondents agreed that there is no advantage to joining these criminal practices. It is not beneficial for society or even for participants because when they are caught, they end up paying with their own lives.	The general perception is that there are no benefits in engaging in crime. People who get involved in crime put themselves in danger and run the risk of ending up in jail.
To what extent do the groups control territory or the local economy?	Local criminal groups do not control any territory in Montepuez. However, it is dangerous to walk in the streets at certain times of the day, especially in the evening, when they are more active. Motorcycle taxi drivers appeared to be the ones who suffer the most robberies and murders, due to the nature of their work. Respondents explained that the criminals request a motorcycle taxi to reach a certain destination. The driver is asked to stop somewhere and the criminal carries out some activity, which often culminates in the driver's death. Criminal groups do not provide public services. However, one respondent revealed that, at first, the terrorists paid 5 000 meticals (US\$78) to everyone who participated in their	Criminal groups do not control territory or the local economy. Otherwise criminal groups would operate any time of the day.
	everyone who participated in their celebrations in the mosques. When he left home for the mosque he was sure he would return with some money for his family's needs.	



Impact of the criminal market	Respondents: Men	Respondents: Women
What is the overall impact on the community caused by the criminal groups? Has it caused problems or divisions among community members?	The respondents were unanimous that these criminal activities increase poverty. There is increasing homelessness and loss of goods in some Montepuez communities due to the burning of houses and constant robberies.	In Montepuez, divisions between the members of the community resulting from the practice of illicit activities have not yet been identified.
	Crime has created problems and divisions between community members, especially when some of them are involved in this activity. Whenever this happens 'there are demands between neighbourhoods, between the family of the wrongdoer and the injured person [] they do not speak'.	
	There was consensus that the criminal groups and the insurgents do not have specific targets. Both children and men and women are affected by criminal activity.	
How much and in what way does the criminal market and groups contribute to local violence? Conflict?	Criminal markets and groups are responsible for the circulation of weapons and drugs. These groups destabilize communities because they carry out robberies and murders.	Organized crime creates insecurity and discomfort in the community, and contributes to an increase in physical and emotional violence.
What is the environmental impact of the criminal market (if applicable)?	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Is there corruption linked to local criminal activity? Are bribes to public officials common? At what level of government?	Corruption and bribery occur at all levels of governance in Montepuez. Respondents gave the example of criminals who were arrested through the work of the community itself and handed over to the police but subsequently went unpunished. This situation not only worries the community but also supports the belief that the force of law can be escaped through corruption and bribery in Montepuez.	Criminal groups are organized and bribes to public officials are common, especially in the defence and security sector. They do this in order to achieve their goals and commit crimes without being constrained by the police authorities.
Do local communities have a sense of local responsibility to combat organized crime?	There are two perceptions about local responsibility to fight crime in the community. Those who said 'yes' said that communities in Montepuez district are organized into patrol groups that, together with the heads of the units and community police, respond to any threat that may arise in the community. When patrol groups catch a thief, the community police are responsible for taking the criminal to the state police.	Communities have a sense of responsibility, particularly because the police do not respond effectively to the challenges of the community. So in order to preserve their own interests, communities self-organize and develop their own security solutions, such as community policing.
	Those who said 'no' argued that the community does not recognize its role in fighting organized crime and that it is not prepared for it either	



PART 2:

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Building block 1: Effective state support

General	Respondents: Men	Respondents: Women
How effective is the state in responding to challenges in your community caused by criminal market?	There were two perceptions of state efficiency. While some respondents claimed that the state is responsive to community challenges, others argued that it does not respond effectively. The ongoing insurgency in Cabo Delgado and high youth unemployment rates in Montepuez were highlighted to demonstrate the state's inefficiency.	The state is not effective when responding to challenges in the community. Respondents pointed to instability and weak law enforcement as examples of state incapacity.
Does the state response protect or threaten community members? In what ways?	Some respondents believed that the state has been active in protecting its citizens, especially victims of violence. Another felt that state intervention tends to sow fear in the citizens: 'We don't feel protected because of its aggressions.'	It was felt that the state does not protect community members.

Political leadership and governance	Respondents: Men	Respondents: Women
To what degree do people have faith in their government – at the national and local levels?	While some did not trust the government at all levels, others had full confidence in the government, especially the local level, for being open to listening to the concerns of the communities.	People do not trust the government, particularly because the government is not responsive to their expectations and needs.
	'When we express our situation here in the district, it is shared with the superior authorities, and if it is a really concerning issue, it is resolved. It is resolved there in the provincial level. And we are very satisfied.'	
How open is the state to fostering and promoting a strong and independent civil society sector, including the media? What is the level of collaboration between government agencies and NGOs and private citizens?	Some argued that the state is not open to promoting civil society, indicating the lack of collaboration between them. Others disagreed, and pointed to state programmes that do include some elements of civil society.	The local government is open to promoting a strong civil society.
Does the community have access to resources, basic services? Is their distribution fair?	For some respondents, everyone has access to these water, energy, hospital and school services and their distribution is fair.	Not everyone has access to basic services. People who live in the village can easily benefit from basic services, but those who live
Does the community have power to influence their distribution?	Others said that not all community members in Montepuez have access to basic services, so the distribution is unfair. It is normal for streets in the same neighbourhood to have different conditions. One has access to piped	remotely do not have this opportunity. There are communities without public transport and schools, and the health system is weak. The distribution is not equitable.
	water, the other does not. Some	The community has no power to



Political leadership and governance	Respondents: Men	Respondents: Women
	neighbourhoods have electricity while others are still in the dark, particularly those in expansion areas. Not everyone has access to education, because it is very expensive, especially at secondary level.	influence its distribution. Civil society organizations have been working to empower communities.
	While some respondents believed that communities have the power to influence service distribution and always demand it, others said that the communities do not have the information. Those who do know do not express themselves, at the risk of being seen badly by the community. So the people cannot claim their rights.	

Education system	Respondents: Men	Respondents: Women
How strong is the local education system? What is the average educational attainment?	Respondents who were satisfied with the local education system still wanted more schools to be constructed. Some schools have been constructed in order to reduce the distance that students must travel. Despite the expansion of some schools, many children still study 'in the shadows'.	Education in Montepuez is still weak and institutions are mired in an environment of rampant corruption. Girls are more likely to drop out of school prematurely due to child marriage and this is one of the factors that contribute to the poor development of women and girls.
	Respondents who considered local education to be weak, blamed this on high levels of corruption in this sector. In addition to the cost of schooling, this group was concerned about the constant illegal charges that students at all levels must pay in order to proceed regardless of having mastered the subject or not.	
	'People pay money to pass, students pay money to pass. How can we have a quality education here? [] They don't let you leave without paying. Even if you don't know anything, you pay to pass.'	
Is there investment in early childhood education and care (ECEC)?	There are no public preschools for children in Montepuez. The existing schools are private and charge large amounts, which means that many children do not go to preschool.	No, there is not. Children usually enter primary school at age six, without ever having gone through an early children's education centre.



Justice system	Respondents: Men	Respondents: Women
What is the local justice system like? Do local courts or dispute mechanisms address the criminal activity outlined above? In what ways? Do community members view the legal response as helpful? Ineffective? Harmful?	Montepuez has community and district courts. Community courts are mostly responsible for resolving social issues in the community, such as divorce, physical assault, land problems and petty theft. Serious criminal matters go to the district court or higher. Some said that people trust community courts and their judgments. Those who do not can appeal to the higher courts. Others disagreed, arguing that people are not satisfied with the decisions of community courts – 'They don't feel that there was justice' – and that women feel most wronged.	There are community courts that resolve issues related to theft and divorce. Today, women benefit more from some decisions, especially those related to divorce. Before, the man kept all the goods; today, the decisions of the court tend to ensure equality of goods for all, men and women. However, not all people are satisfied with the decisions that are made in these courts.
Is informal justice provided by criminal groups?	No.	No.
Has local government developed measures that address victim care and how effective are these measures? To what degree do witness protection programmes exist?	Some respondents did not know of any official government response to these issues. Others said there are mechanisms to protect victims of some types of violence in the communities but did not give further details.	No.

Law enforcement	Respondents: Men	Respondents: Women
What type of law enforcement exists in the community – military, civilian police, community-based armed groups, a combination? Has local law enforcement been adequately resourced?	Community policing groups engage in night patrols to complement police work. The existing local law enforcement has been poorly resourced.	There is joint work done by police and courts.
What is the relationship between these groups and the community?	In general, there is a relationship of distrust with the communities.	There is a lack of interaction. This situation makes collaboration and engagement between the state and communities difficult.
To what degree is law enforcement trusted and seen as reliable by local communities?	The idea that there are police officers who are members of criminal networks puts the credibility of the police in question and undermines good relations.	There is no trust.



Building block 2: Social capital

Community cohesion	Respondents: Men	Respondents: Women
Is the community culturally or ethnically diverse or homogeneous? Are there tensions along specific ethnic or social lines?	Montepuez's cultural diversity includes Machanganas, Makondes, Mwanis, local Makuas and Makuas from Macomia District. It has been accentuated by the displacement of people due to the insurgency in Cabo Delgado. Living together in harmony is difficult but, in general, there is peaceful coexistence.	No one respects another's culture.
Have there been any major changes in the local population (inflow, outflow)? If so, has this affected the community?	However, the presence of new people has caused increases in the cost of living, the number of people living in families, and the number of children and people on the streets as beggars. 'The inflow of victims of terrorism has brought changes. It has brought negative changes.'	There are many more people entering Montepuez than leaving the district.
What is the feeling of belonging to and a sense of place about the community? What is the level of trust within the community?	Some respondents said that, although the number of people in Montepuez has increased, people are welcomed and fed because 'above all, we are all brothers'. On the other hand, those displaced by the insurgency feel embarrassed and are targeted for discrimination. In some situations, locals accuse displaced people of any disorder in the community, especially anything related to robbery. 'Even in resettlement centres, some are humiliated. Sometimes they are not given food. [] There is no group that is working to support the discriminated. These are things I hear every day.'	There is no feeling of belonging.
Is the community able to respond to crises in ways that strengthen community bonds and capacity to cope?	The community has played its role, not only by denouncing criminals but also through community patrolling initiatives.	No, communities are not capable of responding to crises because they are not prepared for that.



Building Block 3: Community capacity

Community capacity	Respondents: Men	Respondents: Women
What is the ability of the community to self-organize? What are the means for this?	Some communities manage to organize themselves into associations and patrol groups. These groups do not yet exist in all communities.	They are not organized.
What types of social networks among groups and individuals exist within the community? For instance: political organizations, volunteer and civic organizations, religious organizations, women's groups, or youth groups.	In some communities, people organize themselves into associations of peasants, blacksmiths or poultry farmers, dance and singing groups and xitique groups (trust-based savings channels), as well as committees that deal with issues related to water, health and environmental sanitation. People join movements such as the Organization of Mozambican Women and the Organization of Mozambican Youth, which are connected to Frelimo, the ruling party.	There are international organizations, such as the International Organization for Migration and Save The Children. There are also some associations that work on issues of women and youth empowerment. There are few such organizations, however, established in Montepuez.
Which of these groups respond to the harms caused by the activity explained in section 1? In what ways?	Civil society organizations have played their role in promoting development and the well-being of the population. Some local foundations develop projects to support the displaced with hygiene products and dignity kits, among others.	
Are their safe spaces for women, men and youth at risk? Please explain. Does civil society engage in treatment and victim support activities (e.g. running drug treatment facilities)?	In general, there are no safe spaces for youth and women at risk. This, in part, results from a lack of trust in institutions. Young people do not have freedom of expression and fear reprisals and persecution. There are small associations, but they work inconsistently, so it is difficult to identify organizations that provide assistance to victims.	There are no safe spaces for any of these groups. There is no infrastructure that guarantees safety, and the police are not responsive.

Local media	Respondents: Men	Respondents: Women
Are there strong local media? Does local media provide a voice to both state and non-state actors combatting organized crime?	There is no community radio, except at the district/municipal level. Some respondents said that the media broadcast relevant and quality information and promote impartial debates, but felt they should improve the contents to cover all communities in Montepuez. Others suggested that, although community members are able to take information to the radio to be broadcast, it is not considered independent as it is under government supervision.	Only radio stations.



Local media	Respondents: Men	Respondents: Women
Are there attacks against journalists or media houses, or other civil society activists (e.g. environmental defenders), by organized crime or the state? Have there been deaths?	Radio is not used to defame activists. The respondents said that journalists are not attacked, threatened or kidnapped, but perhaps that information is hidden from the public. However, one person told of an ordinary young man who was arrested for recording and sharing content related to the terrorist attacks in the province on social networks.	There are no attacks against journalists.

Obstacles to community responses	Respondents: Men	Respondents: Women
Do groups – beyond identified criminal groups – negatively affect community resilience? Which factors act as obstacles to building community resilience to organized crime?	The lack of unity and collective action in society jeopardizes its development and security. When members of the community are called to contribute and participate – for example, in neighbourhood cleaning campaigns – they do not engage. They do not strive to achieve a common goal.	The communities are not united. They do not participate in neighbourhood activities.
To what extent do local responses to organized crime possibly marginalize certain individuals or groups such as women, refugees, etc.?	Women don't participate in initiatives like community patrolling.	

Building block 4: The role of women in community responses to organized crime

Political and economic power	Respondents: Men	Respondents: Women
What type of authority do women hold in the community?	Women have power and their decisions are respected. 'We have many empowered women, many are administrators in the district, in education and other sectors. In my organization, we are only five men, most are women.'	Women felt they held political and social power, but there is no income equality.
	Men and women get paid and are treated the same. According to one local chief, when community leaders are brought together to solve a problem, they always try to balance the gender: 'If there are 10 leaders, then we gather four men and six women, or five men and five women.' The payments are also divided equally among the leaders, without gender discrimination.	

Women organizing	Respondents: Men	Respondents: Women
How do women organize in the local community?	Women meet among friends to do a weekly xitique, which opens space for them to start their businesses and increase their income.	Women also noted that xitiques are a main way of organizing.
Are there women's groups that counter the negative impacts of organized crime? What do they do?	Although weak, there are small women's associations that seek to contain organized crime through awareness-raising actions.	



Building block 5: Economic capital

Economy of the community	Respondents: Men	Respondents: Women
What types of businesses and jobs exist in the community? How diverse is the local economy?	The predominant activities are agriculture, fishing and commerce, such as sales of basic necessities, drinks, cakes.	Small-scale commerce is the predominant activity in Montepuez.
Are there foreign companies? What is their industry and what is their impact on local communities?	There are timber companies, mostly controlled by the Chinese, as well as ruby mining, Indian stores and multinationals companies.	
What is the local employment rate (compared with national level)? How do income levels compare with the national average? What portion of the community faces food insecurity? Can youth find jobs?	Employment opportunities for local youth in Montepuez are limited, regardless of whether or not a person has studied. Many of the few vacancies are filled by people from other provinces. Local candidates are charged large sums of money to gain access to employment, which becomes difficult.	There are no job opportunities, and when there are vacancies, people are forced to pay to access them. It is normal to be charged 30 000 meticals (approx. US\$500) for a vacancy.
	The respondents stressed that hunger depends on what the fields produce, which varies from year to year. This year, production was good and there is no problem.	

Infrastructure	Respondents: Men	Respondents: Women
Is there access to food, electricity, water?	People have access to food, electricity and water, but it is limited, and the distribution is not equal.	
What are the local communications networks? Access to mobile phones, internet?	Many have access to mobile phones and radio. Few have the capital to acquire a television.	People have access to mobile phones.
Do people feel safe outside their homes?	The respondents agreed that it is not safe to be outside at night. People must be on the alert, as this is the period when criminals are most active.	They don't feel safe outside. Due to
Are the streets safely lit, open spaces safe and accessible?		insecurity and fear of being mugged or raped, women do not feel safe to leave the houses at night.
Are there many empty buildings, unused spaces?	Public lighting is bad. Many light bulbs have been damaged, and maintenance is inadequate. This exacerbates the insecurity in the communities.	Public spaces are not safe.
	There are many empty spaces and many abandoned houses that serve as shelters for criminals. Criminals use these spaces to get high and plan their robberies.	
What are the natural resource base and environmental conditions (local food supplies, energy use, water access)? Has climate change affected livelihoods?	The dominant activity is agriculture. Local communities use wood and charcoal for fuel. There are a limited number of sources of water.	Agriculture is the main activity, and is practised mainly by women. However, this is subsistence agriculture, as women produce
	Climate change has hurt production. The situation is made worse by uncontrolled fires, indiscriminate felling of trees and small-scale mining.	more to help their families and to sell locally. Therefore, it has little growth prospects owing to weak investment.



Infrastructure	Respondents: Men	Respondents: Women
How is access to transportation – personal transportation access and public options?	Although there is public transport, people more often use motorcycles, motorcycle taxis and bicycles to reach their destination.	People use personal transport or take moto-taxis. Public transport is inefficient.



Notes

¹ RTP *Notícias, Montepuez recebeu* 10 *mil deslocados do conflito no norte de Moçambique*, 19 April 2021, https://headtopics.com/pt/montepuez-recebeu-10-mil-deslocados-do-conflito-no-norte-de-mocambique-19708415.

https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/GITOC-ESAObs-Insurgency-illicit-markets-and-corruption-The-Cabo-Delgado-conflict-and-its-regional-implications.pdf.



² Eva Renon, Terrorism in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province: Examining the data and what to expect in the coming years, IHS Markit, 5 April 2021, https://ihsmarkit.com/research-analysis/terrorism-mozambiques-cabo-delgado-data.html.

³ Julia Stanyard et al, Insurgency, illicit markets and corruption: The Cabo Delgado conflict and its regional implications, Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, February 2022, p. 32,





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