

**CONTEXT**

The humanitarian situation in northern Mozambique is primarily a protection crisis. Since October 2017, Cabo Delgado, the least developed province in Mozambique, has increasingly been targeted by the actions of non-State Armed Groups (NSAG), resulting in forced displacement and serious protection incidents against civilians. The actions, initially comprised to a restricted area of the province, have rapidly expanded its geographic scope, with the NSAG gaining effective control of part of the territory since August 2020. By the same token, attacks have become more sophisticated, with use of heavy weaponry and increased number of combatants. As a result, in 2020 alone there was an increase of more than 800% in the number of IDPs, when compared to the situation in the end of 2019.



Credit: ©UNHCR/Deiliany Souza

Humanitarian actors work to respond to two different needs: **(i)** the immediate response to individuals that have recently arrived from areas of conflict and **(ii)** individuals that have been in areas of refuge for a longer period, requiring a different type of intervention.

On a Protection standpoint the challenges are many, with reports of serious human rights violations, particularly affecting women and children. Issues reported include serious gender-based violations against women and children, kidnapping, recruitment, forced marriage and torture. In areas of refuge, scarcity of resources and increased arrival of IDPs have resulted in frictions and stigmatization of groups. Lack of documentation and access to livelihoods are additional elements that further increase the vulnerability of individuals.

**PARTNERS` ACTIVITIES:**

One of the main challenges identified is the provision of adequate response to the needs on the ground. In 2020, several restrictions, such as Covid-19 measures and visa and credential limitations, have significantly reduced the response capacity. Even so, an overview of the key areas of activities engaged by cluster partners indicates a somewhat balanced response.

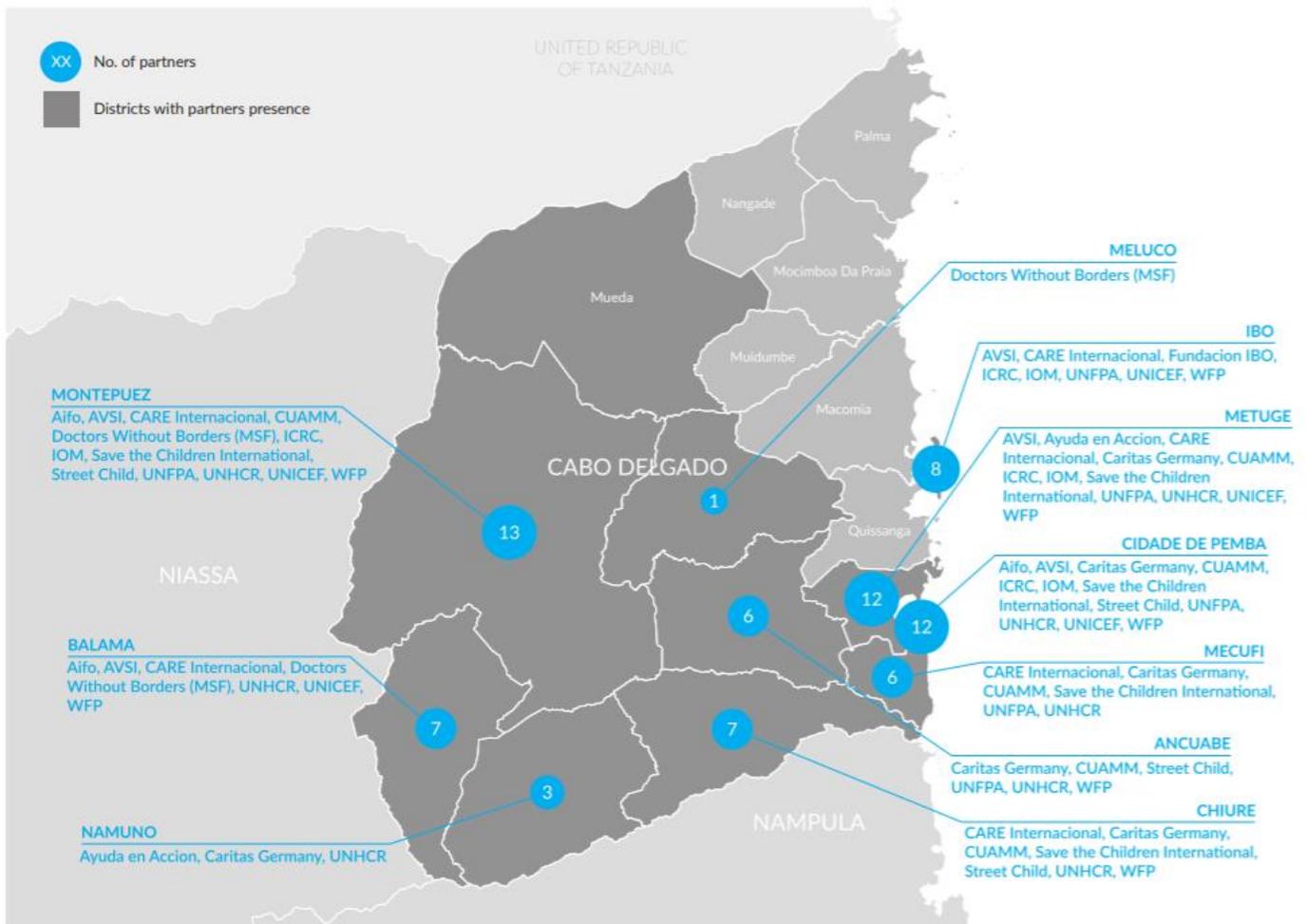
However, this does not necessarily indicate that the response is fully covered. For example, on GBV response, despite the high number of partners reporting activities, it does not reflect GBV response-services on the ground, as a substantial part of it is related to awareness-raising initiatives. This not only risk creating demand for survivor response, whereas there is limited access to GBV services, but also does not fully provide for the existing demand for such services.



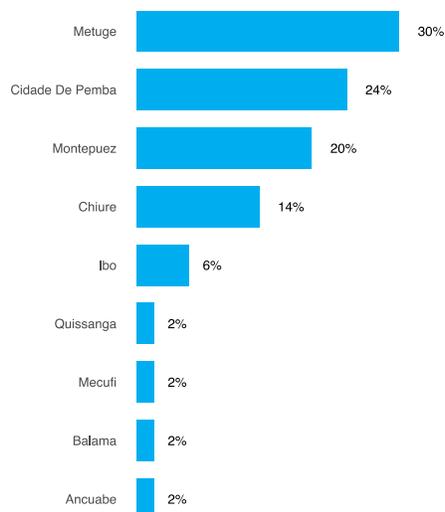
**Partner sectorial activity:**



The geographic presence of the partners in Cabo Delgado confirm the strong foothold of the members of the Protection Cluster in the accessible areas of the province, with highlight to the presence in Pemba, Metuge and Montepuez districts. On the other hand, attention should be provided to the areas to the north of the province; these hard-to-reach areas are directly affected by the attacks, with an unknown number of affected individuals and serious reports of protection incidents. The map below was produced with the collaboration of the cluster members:



### Activities by district:<sup>1</sup>



The reported activities to the Cluster indicate a concentration in some of the areas with the highest number of displaced individuals, such as Metuge, Pemba and Montepuez. However, as it would be expected due to the lack of physical presence (see map above), the areas in the north, with great need for assistance, also with high concentration of displaced individuals, are not receiving substantial protection interventions so far, with special attention needed for the districts of Mueda.

## PROTECTION CHALLENGES

The main challenges identified in the provision of an adequate protection response to the needs on the ground, include **Covid-19-related restrictions** and questions of **access** including difficulties in scaling up teams because of **visa and credential limitations**. In comparison with the rapidly increasing demands there was no possible comparable growth in the capacity of the partners to increase the response.

The **transition from a natural disaster response to a situation of internal conflict**, with the necessary implications that these two different scenarios present to the interventions are also a restricting factor. It is required a step up in the response, with **the accreditation of new partners** with additional technical and material capacity to expand the implementation of activities.

The extent of the attacks against civilians, still causing daily arrivals, forces protection partners to concomitantly respond in several different fronts, there is **lack of technical capacity to adequately respond to the increasing demands**. For example, increased presence of partners and projects to work in areas such as disability and HLP are needed.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

**Principled resettlement of IDPs** - The Protection Cluster **led the discussion on the principled movement of IDPs in Cabo Delgado**, strongly advocating with authorities and sectors engaged in the response, as well as implementing concrete actions to identify needs and intentions of IDPs and host

The **limited access to parts of the territory** is among one of the key challenges faced by members of the Protection Cluster. Security incidents, infrastructural issues and pending authorizations have resulted in a gap in the response. **The operational presence is heavily concentrated** in the south of Cabo Delgado Province; scaling up and reaching to less accessible areas is necessary to identify and respond to the needs in those areas.

Increased insecurity concerns, with the geographic expansion of the areas attacked by the NSAG also presents a limiting factor to the implementation of Protection activities.

By its nature, **Protection response is hard to quantify and to be visually identified**. It is a lengthy process that involved the mapping of key issues, the development of capacity, advocacy, and the laying of foundations throughout the cluster system. **Mainstreaming protection** and having it understood and incorporated in all levels of the response if paramount for an effective implementation of a holistic response.

communities and drafting specific guidelines to support all actors involved in the response. This supported the **establishment of an objective system to ensure that movements are voluntary, informed and dignified**. As examples of the documents drafted:

<sup>1</sup> Report provided to the Protection Cluster 5Ws list – January 2021.



- I. *Return, Relocation and Resettlement Guidelines*
- II. *Principled Movement of IDPs Guidelines*
- III. *Protection Cluster Key advocacy notes*
- IV. *Protection Cluster Vulnerability Criteria*

**Protection Monitoring** – identification of key vulnerabilities, trends, and gaps. The monitoring is an ongoing exercise that assesses protection vulnerabilities at household level, allowing the identification of needs/gaps in the response. So far, **more than 1,400 household in five districts were assessed**. The exercise is planned to continue assessing new districts in 2021, allowing the preparation of an informed response by cluster members and other humanitarian actors.

**Coordination of protection actors in Cabo Delgado:** Regular meetings, in which a growing number of partners are participating. This **allows timely and coordinated responses, information sharing about the most urgent protection needs and strengthened protection response** chairing protection cluster meetings.

**Mainstreaming Protection in humanitarian delivery:** the Protection Cluster and partners are on the frontline, taking part in **inter-sectoral assessments of IDP sites, observing various processes such as relocations in order to offer advice, identify protection needs and provide guidance**. Furthermore, the Protection Cluster is frequently meeting with other sector/cluster leads to provide support and advise on protection.

**Consultation with communities:** Together with partners the Protection Cluster has **led consultation with communities on preferred durable solutions** prior to resettlement exercises. This has enabled the implementation of the principled movement of individuals and helped the implementation of responses to most pressing needs.

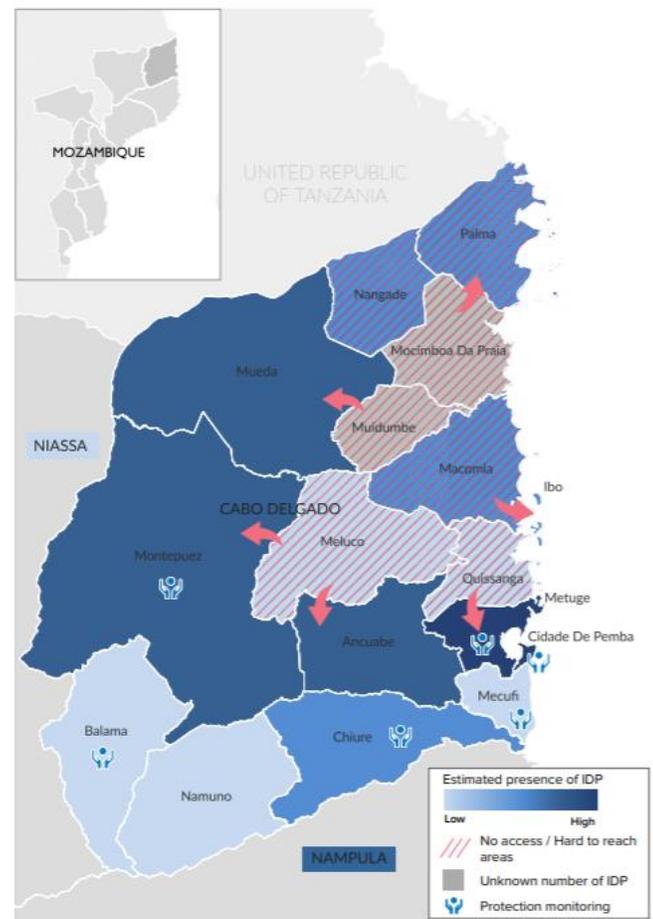
**Informing Strategic Decision Making:** protection is advocated as a standing point in the agenda of the Cabo Delgado Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG), during which protection is brought to the center of the response.

**Capacity building activities:** the provision of training on key protection principles support its mainstreaming throughout the

cluster response and strengthen the quality of the services provided to IDPs and members of the host community.

**Field monitoring** – direct presence in areas of refuge, directly engaging with IDPs, host communities, partners and local authorities. This supports general overview of the response, strengthening coordination and advocacy for intervention, including in hard to reach areas, such as Mueda.

**Disability Working Group** – the development of the Cabo Delgado WG is a response to the main findings of the Protection Monitoring and the lack of the technical expertise in the sector engaged in the response. This group aims at bringing the inclusion of individuals with disabilities to the entire response, as well as increasing the implementation of projects in the sector and the arrival of new partners. =



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## 2021 STRATEGIC PLANS

Within the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) framework, the Protection Cluster is working with partners to prioritize responsive and lifesaving needs to mitigate or avert direct loss of life, physical and psychological harm. These include:

- **Protection monitoring and assessments** – continue and expand the identification of main protection trends among IDPs in Cabo Delgado;
- **Increase case management capacity** – expand partners` and government capacity in the management of cases, with particular focus in GBV, child protection, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS); as well as safe referrals, including information dissemination on available services;
- **Legal awareness** – increased capacity and coordination for access to civil-documentation (Mozambican ID), support to Unaccompanied Minors and Separated Children (UMSC), legal counseling to IDP and host communities;
- **Gender-Based Violence response** - assistance and counseling for survivors including GBV and human trafficking and Individual Protection Assistance (IPA) including Cash-Based Interventions (CBI);
- **Protection Mainstreaming** - the protection cluster will continue to prepare trainings on protection mainstreaming to partners and other clusters. So far, several partners and another cluster have benefitted from protection mainstreaming training and advice;
- **Urban IDPs** – increase the response and the advocacy to support IDPs hosted in urban settings of the province;
- **Livelihoods** – access to economic integration is a fundamental element to prevent protection risks.

