

14 June de 2023



**HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS IN THE SOUTH AND
TOTALENERGIES IN THE NORTHEAST: OPTIONS FOR
INTERNAL DISPLACED PERSONS IN A CONTEXT
OF A FRAGILE STATE¹**

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ABSTRACT

This text aims to describe the humanitarian and internally displaced persons situation in the province of Cabo Delgado. An excessive concentration of humanitarian actors in the south of the province is demonstrated, and in the north, largely destroyed, the absence of the State and Non-Governmental Organizations is made up for by TotalEnergies. Between the two territories a ring of circulation of the insurgents was formed who, although more fragile, continue to threaten the movement to the northeast of the province, affecting the economy of the region.

In a scenario in which the return of large gas investment is expected, there is no prospect of improving public services, initiatives to protect local youth, in the face of competition in the labour market, recognition of ethnolinguistic groups on the coast, opening channels of participation and access to justice, or strengthening the rule of law. The migration of qualified cadres to the region is expected to increase social differentiation and inflation of essential goods and services, with consequences for the poorest. Recent history allows us to predict the repetition of work stoppages, riots and various resistances, with the potential to mobilize social fringes for violent behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to describe the humanitarian situation in the province of Cabo Delgado, distinguishing the scenario of the Northeast zone (Palma and Mocímboa da Praia) from the south of the province. It is about analysing population movements, access to public services, carrying out economic activities, humanitarian aid, as well as the reconstitution of the social fabric and the exercise of citizenship. The findings result from the application of 600 questionnaires to families affected by the conflict in the districts of Palma, Mocímboa da Praia, Metuge, Montepuez and Chiúre (see Table 1), throughout the months of April and May 2023, complemented by interviews with displaced persons, technicians from non-governmental organizations, public officials and the private sector, as well as extensive field observation.

¹ A special thanks to the VAMOB team, to the research assistant Herminio Paiva André, but also to Abudo Gafuro, Anchinha Abdul, Belmiro Yahaia and Sandra Jatila. The research in the district of Palma had the logistical support of TotalEnergies.

Table 1:
Description of the total number of respondents by district

Local	Administrative Post	District	Respondents
Chimoio	Mirate	Montepuez	60
Mapupulo	Mapupulo		60
Ntokota	Mieze	Metuge	60
25 de Junho	Metuge Sede		60
Katapua	Katapua	Chiúre	70
Maningane	Chiúre Sede		50
Bairro Milamba		Municipality os Mocímboa da Praia	60
Bairro 30 de Junho			60
Monjane	Olumbi	Palma	60
Quirindi	Quionga		60
TOTAL			600

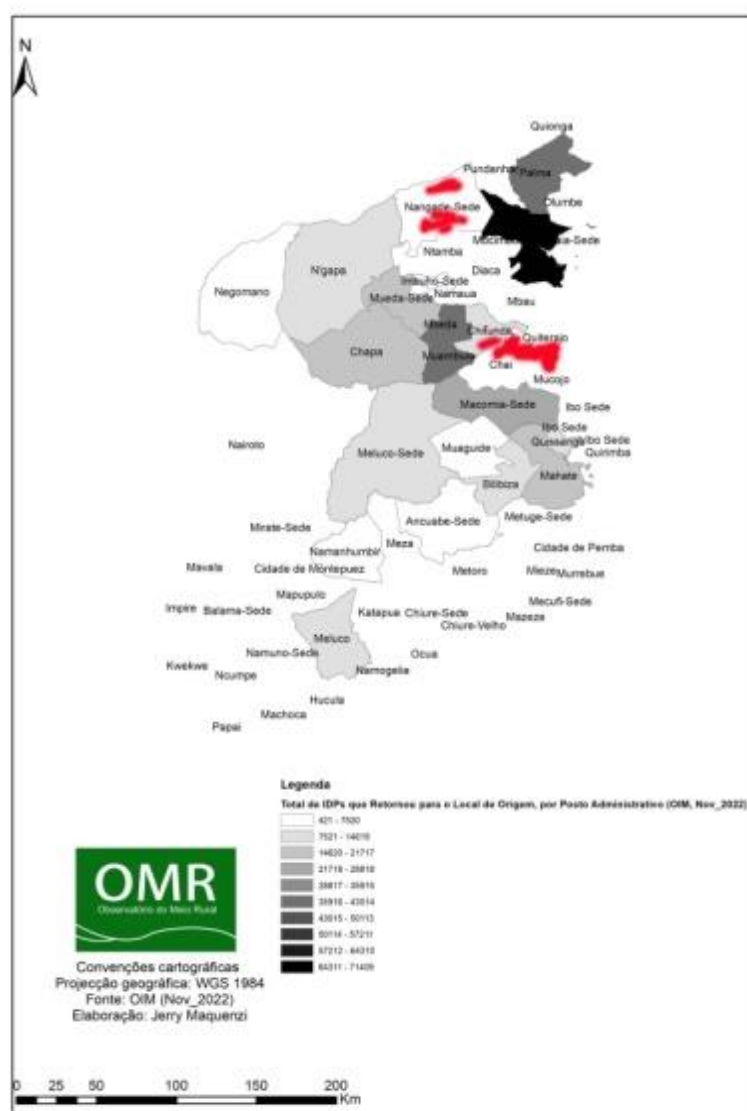
1. SECURITY CONDITIONS AND POPULATION MOVEMENTS

In the Northeast region of Cabo Delgado, a situation of less insecurity is consolidated. From Palma to Quionga, Pundanhara, Olumbi or Mocímboa da Praia circulation is tranquil and there are no reports of incidents. Nevertheless, all TotalEnergies' staff circulate with a military escort. The population growth in Mocímboa da Praia resulted in an increase in anonymity, and in the movement of populations and motorized vehicles, including at night in and out of the municipality. The growing relaxation is interpreted as indiscipline, generating a growing number of alert meetings, conducted by the defence and security forces, with calls for vigilance, including threats of curfews. If, until 2021, a great distrust of the military towards the population was evident, the withdrawal of the group of rebels from the ground was responsible for a relaxation of the relationship.

The Rwandan troops continue to be the main resource that the population has access to in cases of incidents with military personnel, documented by the press (Redacção, 10.04.2023). The Rwandan troops distributed telephone contacts to the people, which they resort to in any conflict situation, followed by the prompt arrival of foreign troops. In a scenario of no Attorney General's Office, Criminal Investigation Police, Institute of Sponsorship and Legal Assistance (IPAJ) or courts, Rwandans and some TotalEnergies' technicians seek to fill the void of State functions. Rwandan protection has contributed to an increase in phenomena of disobedience or irreverence towards the Mozambican police accompanied by Rwandans' increasing reluctance to get involved in internal affairs.

Around the districts of Mocímboa da Praia and of Palma an unstable ring is formed (marked in red on map 1), which begins on the coast of Macomia and extends along the Messalo River basin through the administrative post of Chai, passing through the lowlands of Muidumbe to the district of Nangade. Despite the lower frequency of attacks and reports of good coexistence with the population (in the coastal areas), the situation remains unsafe, threatening road access to the northeast of the province.

Map 1: Total Internal Displaced Persons returning to their place of origin, by administrative post and attack zones throughout the first half of 2023 (Nov/ 2022)



Source: IOM (November 2022)

The safety and estimated return of TotalEnergies trigger the return movements of populations to the Northeast of Cabo Delgado. Throughout the month of April, data on displaced persons movements collected by IOM (11.04.2023) continue to report population movements from Mueda, Montepuez, Metuge and Pemba to Mocímboa da Praia. In Palma, it is estimated that the number of individuals has exceeded the total number of residents before the conflict, so that the flow of returnees is accompanied by waves of migration in search of employment. Population movements were mainly financed by the populations themselves. About two-thirds (64.7%) of the respondents in the municipality of Mocímboa da Praia bore the expenses with their own capital, and 30.4% were supported by family members. Many claim that they sold food (self-grown or from humanitarian aid), among other possessions they had acquired in the south of the province (cattle, solar panels, or even homes built in the centers for displaced people), to finance their return.

In Muidumbe district, although some people have returned to Miangalewa, the situation remains insecure. Many individuals remain displaced in the high lands of the district or in Mueda, residing in borrowed houses or renting residences, particularly from former combatants.

Some fishermen risk returning to the coast of Macomia temporarily or permanently. The returnees report occasional encounters with armed insurgents who, in an attempt to regain the confidence of the population, purchase consumer goods at generous prices, distribute monetary values to the most disadvantaged and pray with the population. The reports give an account of the ineffectiveness of the defence and security forces (Carta, 08.06.2023).

The return to the north of Cabo Delgado translates into an increase in the southern part of the province of unoccupied houses in several centres for displaced people, particularly in Mapupulo and Mirate, in the district of Montepuez, and in Katapua or Meculane, in the district of Chiúre. Despite these return movements, displaced families from Ancuabe, Nairoto and Mecúfi remain there due to the attacks throughout 2022. The start of food distribution in Quissanga accelerated the return movements of the displaced population from Metuge to the neighbouring district.

Stories continue to circulate of relatives of leaders of host communities registered as displaced, who have even been allocated plots in resettlement centres. In the district of Chiúre, some unoccupied houses were leased by the heads of the resettlement centres to individuals from the district headquarters village, usually social activists of projects promoted by NGOs or technicians of companies that carry out public works on the ground. In other places, abandoned houses were occupied by displaced people from Nairoto and Ancuabe (who took refuge in Mirate, in the district of Montepuez) or from the southwest of Mecúfi (who moved to Mieze) district of Metuge.

Although the research team observed an increase in the number of unoccupied houses (notably in the centres of Chimoio, 25 June and especially in Katapua and Ntele), official data do not report significant variations in the number of displaced, having registered, in some cases, population increases (in Chimoio) This contradiction raises two hypotheses. On the one hand, it can be justified by the low motivation of local leaders to update the official figures, in a scenario of decreased food aid. Secondly, manipulation of the count by local leaders, inflating the number of displaced for their own benefit, in the face of the impotence of the United Nations Organizations to carry out verification.

Table 2:
Change in the total number of displaced persons, by resettlement centre, in 2022 and 2023

District	Administrative Post	Resettlement Centre	November 2022	May 2023	Variation
Montepuez	Mapupulo	Ntele	21262	17544	-17,5%
		Namputo	6616	5152	-22,1%
		Momane	2680	2747	2,5%
		Expansão	1026	1026	0,0%
	Mirate	Chimoio	2022	4218	108,6%
Metuge	Metuge sede	25 de Junho	14842	14842	0,0%
	Mieze	Ntocota	9680	9680	0,0%
Chiúre	Katapua	Katapua	3370	1795	-46,7%
	Chiúre Sede	Maningane	5544	5839	5,3%

Source: IOM

In other resettlement centres, many displaced people are staying, particularly in Maningane (Chiúre district), Ntokota (in Metuge district), although the latter centre remains one of the most precarious centres (photo 1). The reasons for remaining in the south of the province are heterogeneous.

A first set of reasons is related to insecurity. In Maningane (in Chiúre Sede), many of the people who remain came mostly from militarily unstable zones, especially along the Messalo River basin (the administrative posts of Mbau, Chai and Chitunda). Others have experienced higher levels of violence and remain deeply scarred. In Metuge, abuses of authority by the defence and security forces (especially during periods of delays in their wages) were presented as the main obstacle to return, especially among small traders.

A second set of reasons relates to economic factors. Several displaced individuals that have had access to areas of cultivation in the places of resettlement, or have benefited from external support, were to reconstitute economic activities, which give them some autonomy. In Maningane displaced persons centre (in Chiúre Sede) there has been an informal, relatively dynamic market where clothing (not only from disasters), cereals and legumes (including some surpluses and WFP food), fish and homemade food (*mandaze* and traditional drinks), telephone recharges and financial services (MPesa and EMola) are sold. Other families have opted for the division of their households and the constitution of double residences (a part returns to the place of origin, while others remain in the centre of displaced people, where they have had access to land or expected to benefit from external support), as well as circular movements, in a clear strategy of diversification of access to resources. This is the continuation of strategies verified in previous years (Feijó *et al*, 2022). These phenomena explain the apparent contradiction related to the persistence of many displaced people in the district of Metuge, and, at the same time, a massive return to the neighbouring district of Quissanga.

The abrupt decrease in food assistance, which took place since the end of 2022, is being interpreted as a form of government pressure for the return of populations.

2. RESETTLEMENT CONDITIONS

a) Characteristics of houses and consumer goods

The majority of the population affected by the conflict remains in a situation of great vulnerability. About 30 months after the establishment of the centres for displaced people, the houses remain built with mud and wooden sticks and covered by canvas or grass, particularly vulnerable to inclement weather (photo 1). Most displaced or returned individuals sleep on mats and lack furniture or kitchen utensils. A small number of respondents have chairs (26.1%), radio (11.5%), solar panel (14.6%) or bicycle (7.7%), and about half (55.8%) have a phone.

In the Northeast of the Province, particularly in Mocímboa da Praia, many returnees found their homes looted, partially or heavily damaged (photo 2), having many resorted to borrowed houses from relatives or acquaintances. Many displaced people from the coast of Macomia, south of Mocímboa da Praia or lowlands of Muidumbe do not return to their place of origin, but move to areas closer to that place, residing in borrowed houses or temporary shelters, waiting for news of improved security.

Photo 1: Temporary Centre June 25 in Metuge Sede, on a rainy day (Apr/23)	Photo 2: House destroyed in the Milamba neighbourhood, Municipality of Mocímboa da Praia (Apr/23)
	
Photo: Jerry Maquenzi	Photo: Latifa

In the south of the province, the departure of the displaced has eased pressure for access to water. In several centres for displaced people, investment in water holes guarantees access to protected water to a large part of the population, namely in Katapua, Chiúre district (98.7%), or Mapupulo, Montepuez district (98.3%). But the situation has worsened in Chimoio (in the administrative post of Mirate, Montepuez), where more than 85% of the displaced population resorts to traditional wells and water from the Montepuez River. In Montepuez district, host populations create obstacles for displaced people to use existing water holes. Their reasons relate to the increased pressure for access to water and agricultural land, as well as the fact that they do not benefit from food support.

In terms of sanitation, despite the efforts of humanitarian workers, more than half of the population surveyed (52.4%) continue to use unimproved latrines. This is the predominant reality in the centres for displaced persons 25 June (85%), in Metuge Sede, or Maningane (73.3%), in Chiúre Sede. At the 25 June displaced persons centre, several respondents revealed dissatisfaction with the hygiene conditions in the public latrines, considering them responsible

for diarrhoeal diseases. On the north coast of the province, a large part of the population continues to resort to the sea or the bush, in this case in Quirindi (77.6%), administrative post of Quionga, district of Palma, Milamba neighbourhood (43.3%), in the municipality of Mocímboa da Praia, and in Monjane (38.6%), Olumbi, district of Palma.

3. ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

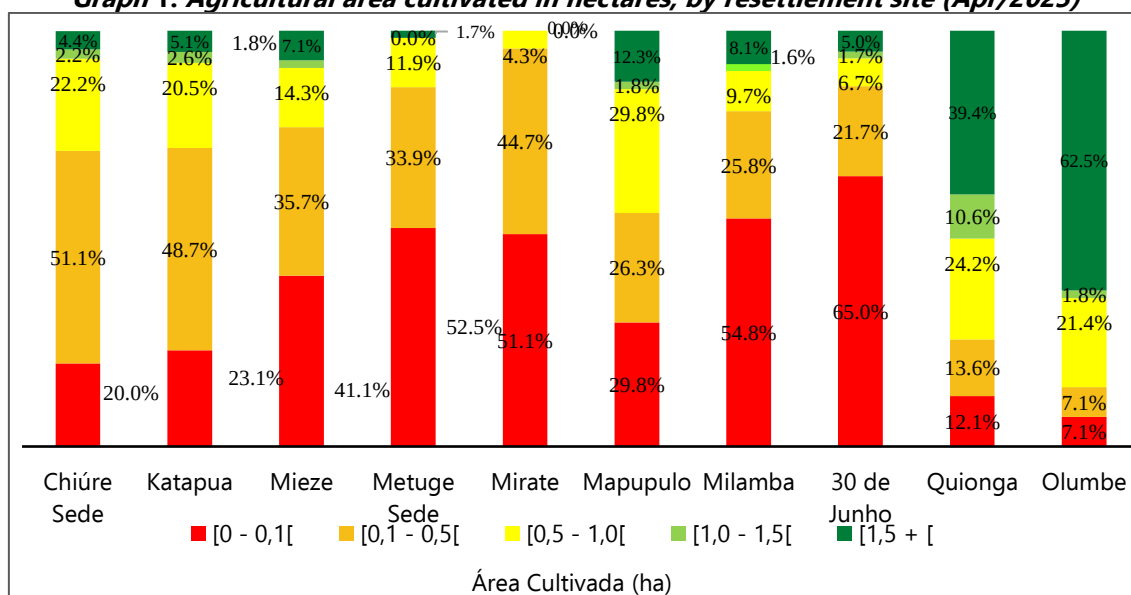
a) Conditions for access to agricultural production, fisheries and livestock farming

As in previous years (Feijó *et al.*, 2022), in the south of the province, populations continue to have difficulties accessing agricultural land, with the overwhelming majority cultivating areas of less than one hectare and being vulnerable in terms of food security. The situation is most serious in the Chimoio displaced persons centre (in Mirate, Montepuez administrative post) and in the 25 de Junho centre (in Metuge Sede), where more than half of the respondents do not have access to agricultural land (see Graph 1). In the most densified displaced persons' centres, agriculture continues to be carried out in small garden beds, around the makeshift shelters (see photo 1) As in previous years (Feijó *et al.*, 2022), in the south of the province, populations continue to have difficulties accessing agricultural land, with the overwhelming majority cultivating areas of less than one hectare and being vulnerable in terms of food security. The situation is most serious in the Chimoio displaced persons centre (in Mirate, Montepuez administrative post) and in the 25 de Junho centre (in Metuge Sede), where more than half of the respondents do not have access to agricultural land (see Graph 1). In the most densified displaced persons centres, agriculture continues to be carried out in small beds, around the makeshift shelters (see photo 1).

The departure of displaced people returning to their areas of origin has not relieved the pressure for land, with persisting reports on demands for monetary values by hosts for the use of agricultural areas, pressures for the devolution of land and long distances to access available areas. A timid land rental market persists, supported mainly by civil servants and pensioners. The exploitation of one hectare can cost between 500 and 1000 meticais per agricultural year.

The situation is reversed in the north of the province, particularly in the district of Palma. The return of the populations to the areas of origin allows access to larger agricultural areas, so that more than half of the respondents in the district of Palma declared to cultivate areas greater than one hectare. Although a large part of the population surveyed in the municipality of Mocímboa da Praia holds agricultural areas in remote areas of the municipality, the reality is that they are afraid to go there. The cultivated areas are very small, including those cultivated by the population of the neighbouring 30 de Junho, located in the expansion zone of the municipality and mostly Makonde. People complain about the lack of instruments (such as axes, hoes or machetes). In the district of Palma, the distribution of various agricultural inputs by commercial companies, financed by TotalEnergies, was observed.

Graph 1: Agricultural area cultivated in hectares, by resettlement site (Apr/2023)



Peasants from the administrative post of Diaca say they are reluctant to exploit agricultural land in areas far from villages or main access roads. Despite the insecurity, some families risk agricultural activity in the Muidumbe lowlands, and the defense and security forces authorize agriculture on the north bank of the Messalo River. Despite being an activity prohibited by the authorities, there are reports of local youths risking to fish in Lake Nguri at night, on the sly. On the north coast of Mocímboa da Praia there is a resumption of fishing activity, although hampered by the lack of nets and vessels. There is an increase in shipbuilding activities.

Livestock production remains stagnant, with many animals sold to pay for return trips or to meet urgent needs. Only 12% of returnees, and 8% of displaced people have animals, mostly chickens. This situation has negative effects on the diet, sources of income and level of savings of households. Except for support for aviaries, usually limited to the perimeter of Afungi, or specific initiatives to promote goats, livestock support is practically non-existent.

b) Trade and other activities

In the South, due to the decrease in population, reduction in economic activities is noticeable in some centres for displaced persons, for example, small stalls (notably in Mapupulo, Montepuez district, and Katapua, Chiúre district), transport services and other services. In Palma Sede the trade around the main artery intensifies, occupying parking spaces and conditioning road circulation. The resumption of the TotalEnergies project, and consequent immigration to the region, will aggravate urban planning problems. Heavily dependent on cross-border trade, the population of the northeast of the province is looking forward to the opening of the border with Tanzania at Namoto. Traders continue to complain of abusive extortion by agents of the defence and security forces.

The reconstruction of the village of Mocímboa da Praia triggered an increase in small electricity, locksmithing and carpentry services, and many professionals moved from Pemba to that municipality. There is still a very small number of transport operators, at least compared to the period before the conflict.

In Quitunda a real estate rental market is consolidated. The increase in works around Afungi translates into the growing arrival of workers from Palma and other districts, increasing the demand for accommodation. Many residents build outbuildings in their backyards, transfiguring the landscape of the village. The real estate dynamism allows us to predict that Quitunda will be a heavily densified neighbourhood, where the labour force necessary for Mozambique LNG and complementary works will be concentrated.

4. THE FOOD SECURITY SITUATION

Due to budget constraints, the World Food Programme had been reducing food distribution in the province (WFP, 03.2023) since April 2022, and this trend increased in 2023. From monthly regularity, food distribution decreased to a quarterly periodicity, focusing only on a few neighbourhoods, alternately. The overwhelming majority of respondents stated that they had not received any food support during the first quarter of 2023. In Montepuez, some respondents reported having received fortified rice (where other ingredients are added) from WFP, creating dissatisfaction among Muslims. The insufficiency of aid generates discourses of injustice in the process of food distribution. The insufficiency of aid generates discourses of injustice in the process of food distribution. In the south of the province, accusations persist of embezzlement of food to leaders responsible for the registration of beneficiaries. The reduction in the number of beneficiaries and the recount of displaced persons by United Nations organizations (threatening networks of illegitimate beneficiaries) trigger accusations against technicians hired by WFP.

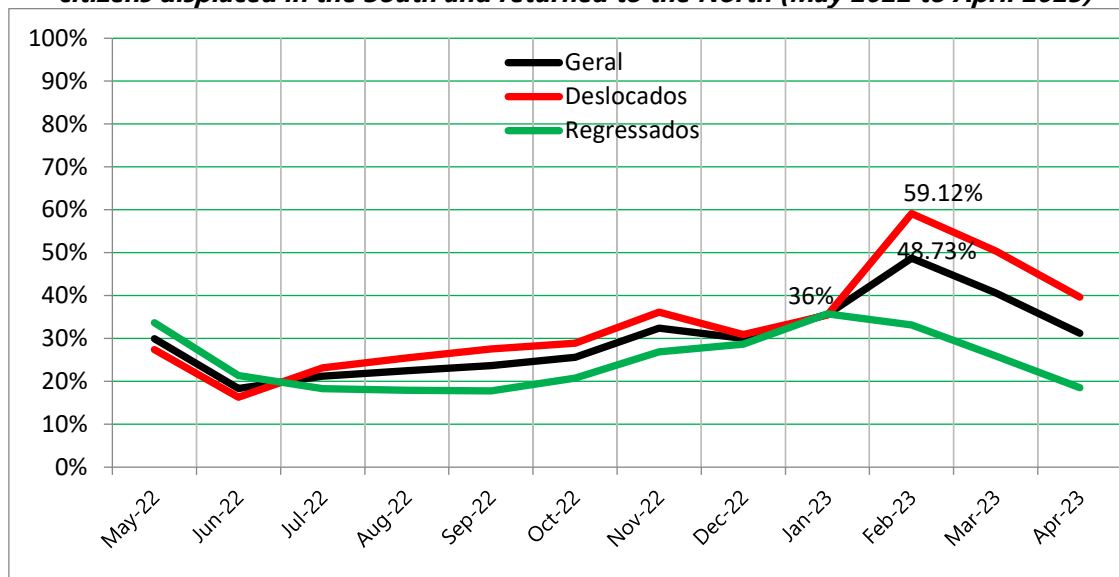
In the north of the province, there are high rates of food deprivation. Supported by TotalEnergies, some civil society organizations distributed food to the returning population at the Pundandar administrative post. The majority of the population surveyed on the coast did not receive any food support throughout the first quarter of 2023. In a scenario of widespread poverty, among the interviewees there are discourses of alleged discrimination between geographical areas, invariably harming the host communities. Having in mind the regularity of food distribution in the south of the province throughout the first half of 2022, several interlocutors in Mocímboa da Praia regretted the option of returning, claiming that "*at least there, we had food*". Many people were clearly weakened and unmotivated.

The absence of food distribution in Mocímboa da Praia increases popular dissatisfaction, aggravated by successive censuses and surveys conducted by NGOs, without materializing in concrete aid. The rope tends to snap to the side of the State, usually in the figure of neighbourhood secretaries, targets of accusations of misappropriation of support. In moments of greatest popular exaltation, the neighbourhood secretaries choose to stay overnight away from their residence, for reasons of insecurity. In the preparation phase of elections, the cadres of the municipality are powerless and particularly concerned about the situation, making promises and seeking to attract external support, which they capitalize politically.

The results of the questionnaires indicate that more than a quarter of the respondents revealed situations of continuous hunger over the last 12 months, reaching this phenomenon greater intensity in the first quarter of the year, a period in which it affected about half of the respondents (48.73%). According to the data from the questionnaires, food insecurity has reached a higher incidence in the displaced population in the south of the province, due to the combination of two critical factors: the difficulty of access to agricultural land, combined with

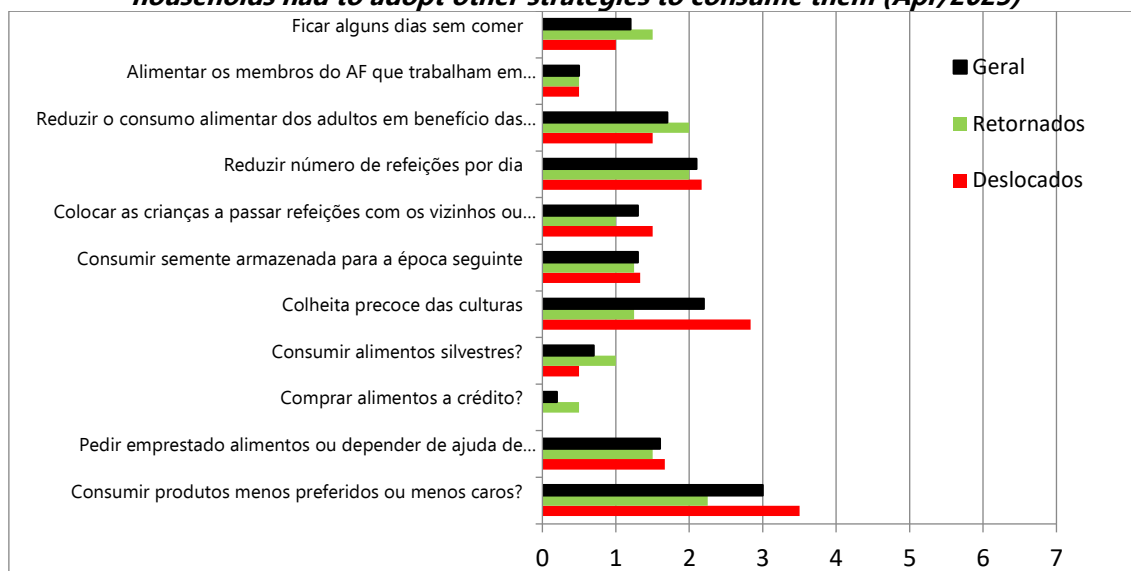
the greater irregularity of food aid. In the northeast of the province, access to the sea and greater agricultural land has alleviated the situation of food insecurity (see Graph 2).

Figure 2: Months of the year in which households reported going hungry, distinguishing citizens displaced in the South and returned to the North (May 2022 to April 2023)



As the harvest months of the first agricultural season, the months of April and May represent a time of year of greater abundance of food, so that the period of application of the questionnaire was not one of food stress. However, the difficulties of access to land and agricultural or fisheries inputs, forced many individuals to look for alternative strategies to ensure food consumption.

Graph 3: Number of days in which, over the last week, not having money or food, households had to adopt other strategies to consume them (Apr/2023)



As shown in Graph 3, "the consumption of less preferred or less expensive foods" (3 days a week), the "early harvesting of crops" (2.2 times a week) and the "reduction in the number of meals" (2.1 times a week) are the most frequent strategies, revealing the existence of a reduced range of food choice.

The data reveal the existence of differences between populations. Those displaced in the South zone opt, above all, for the "*consumption of less preferred or less expensive products*" (3.5 times a week) or for the "*early harvest of crops*" (2.8 times). Although they adopt the same strategies, but with less intensity, the population that returned to the North of the country opt mostly for the "*reduction of the food consumption of adults for the benefit of children*" (2 times a week) or the "consumption of wild foods" (1 time per week).

Many residents resort to mushrooms, tubers (*mingõco*), vines (*vitoe*, *matili*, *makungû*), molluscs (*muata*), rats and crawling animals (in the latter case among Makonde), among other wild foods.

Photo 3: *Mingõco*, sold in the markets in Mocímboa da Praia



Photo: João Feijó

Photo 4: *Muata*, extracted on the beach of Quirindi (administrative post of Quionga)



Photo: João Feijó

5. THE "BEGGING STATE" AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SERVICES

In the northeast of the province much of the public infrastructure is destroyed and many offices operate in containers. The secretariats of the administrative post and the residences of the respective responsible continue to be destroyed, looted or without conditions of comfort. During the month of April, the Government replaced the heads of the administrative posts of the district of Palma, and some pressure was evident for the new ones to be present in the headquarters of the post. Despite the predominance of Mwanis and Makué groups, the new appointees belong to other ethnolinguistic groups. If some master the languages of the coast, dialoguing openly with the populations, others need interpreter to communicate with the locals. At the beginning of May, the newly appointed chiefs continued to reside in the district headquarters village or outside the province, dependent on a ride by technicians from civil society organizations. Permanent secretaries, heads of administrative or local posts, chiefs of staff, school principals or teachers lament the destruction of residences, lack of furniture and of circulating means, requesting support for the reconstruction of their residences, motorcycles and per diems for travel, and rehabilitation of businesses destroyed by the war. As one permanent secretary admitted, "we are a begging State."

Despite the ultimatum of the authorities for the return of civil servants, in the north of the province there is a reluctance to return by the teachers. Many remained in the South, where, in the meantime, they were assigned to other educational establishments, re-establishing their lives. The movement of people is reflected in the disorganization of the education system and the overcrowding of educational establishments. In the south of the province, despite the departure of many families, schools close to centres for displaced people still have classes with many pupils, especially in the first class. In the primary school of Ntele (administrative post of Mapupulo, district of Montepuez) there are classes of the 1st class with 150 students, and in all the schools visited, the size of the first-year classes is usually more than 70 students (see Table 3).

Table 3:
Number of students per class of the first class, by place analysed

Local	District	Number of students
Katapua	Chiúre	95 a 102
Chiúre Sede	Chiúre	75
Mapupulo	Montepuez	120 a 150
Mirate	Montepuez	90
Pemba Cidade	Pemba Cidade	70 a 85
Quionga	Palma	100
Monjane	Palma	70 a 93

On the other hand, the introduction of the Single Salary Table (TSU) has frustrated the expectations of salary increases of many civil servants, who openly present their lack of motivation. The generalized attitude of sloppiness, negligence and laxity translates, not only problems of institutional and leadership disorganization, but also a form of passive resistance of employees. Within the public administration there is an environment of silent strike. In several parts of the province, reports of the populations indicate high rates of absenteeism of teachers (confirmed, in some schools, by observers), as well as high rates of school dropout.

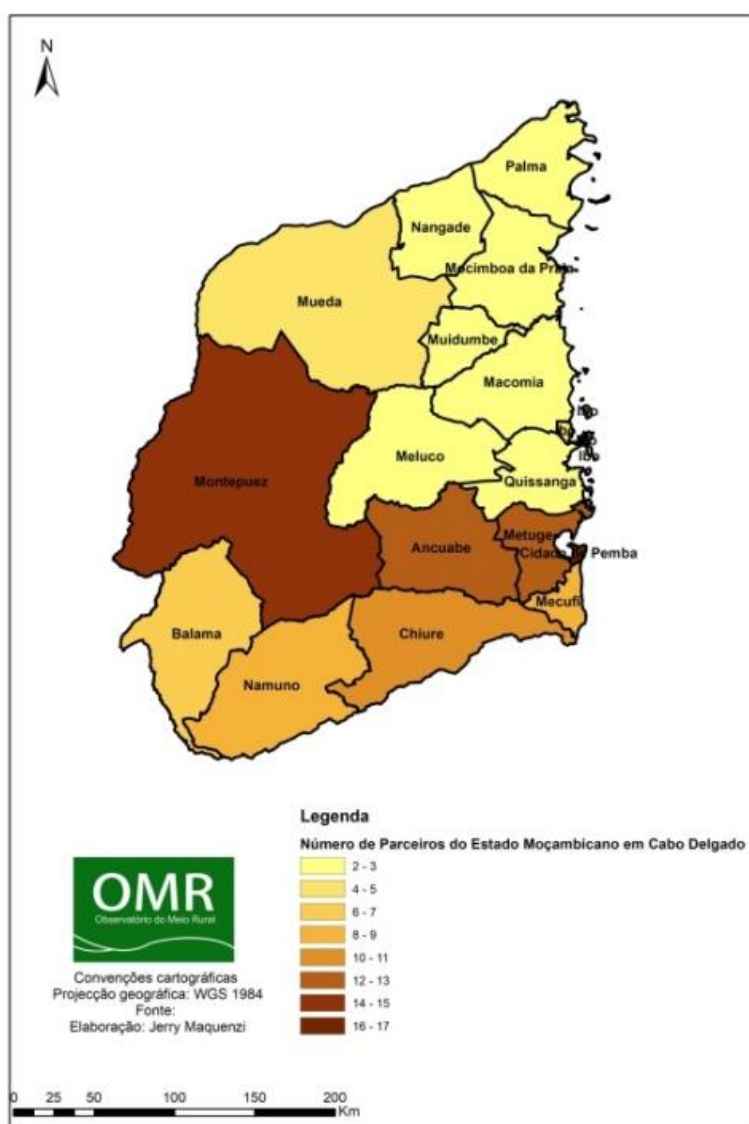
The instability in Muidumbe district leads to an instability of the student population. Sometimes the parents advance the return, leaving the descendants in the safest places. Children move out during the school year, causing them not to be enrolled in school. This undefinition of the student population hinders school planning.

In terms of health services, despite the efforts of many non-governmental organizations, the precariousness of services remains. In the centres for displaced people in the district of Chiúre, access to health is done through mobile brigades, of weekly regularity, which attend to people and bring medicines. On the days of arrival of the brigades to Maningane (Chiúre Sede) it is possible to find several dozen concentrated patients, and only the most serious are attended. The rest have to wait for the following week or go to the district headquarters. A large part of the population travels long distances to reach a health unit or a pharmacy. Complaints of lack of professionals, medications (almost always summarized as paracetamol or quatem) and poor care proliferate. The construction of a health centre in Meculane is expected to alleviate the situation. The same scenario is repeated throughout the province.

6. HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT: REPRODUCTION OF SOCIO-SPATIAL INEQUALITIES?

Humanitarian aid remains heavily concentrated in the south of the province. As map 2 shows, most of the "*partners of the Government of Mozambique*" operate along the Pemba-Montepuez axis, including Ancuabe, Metuge and Chiúre. More than half (54.5%) of the actions of the government partners are concentrated in this geographical area. In the districts of Chiúre and Montepuez, several hotel units are crowded with technicians from humanitarian organizations. Their activities boost the rent-a-car business, attracting commercial operators from Nampula and Niassa to the province of Cabo Delgado.

Map 2: Number of non-governmental organizations in Cabo Delgado, by district (April 2023)



Source: Conselho dos Serviços Provinciais de Representação do Estado, Abril 2023

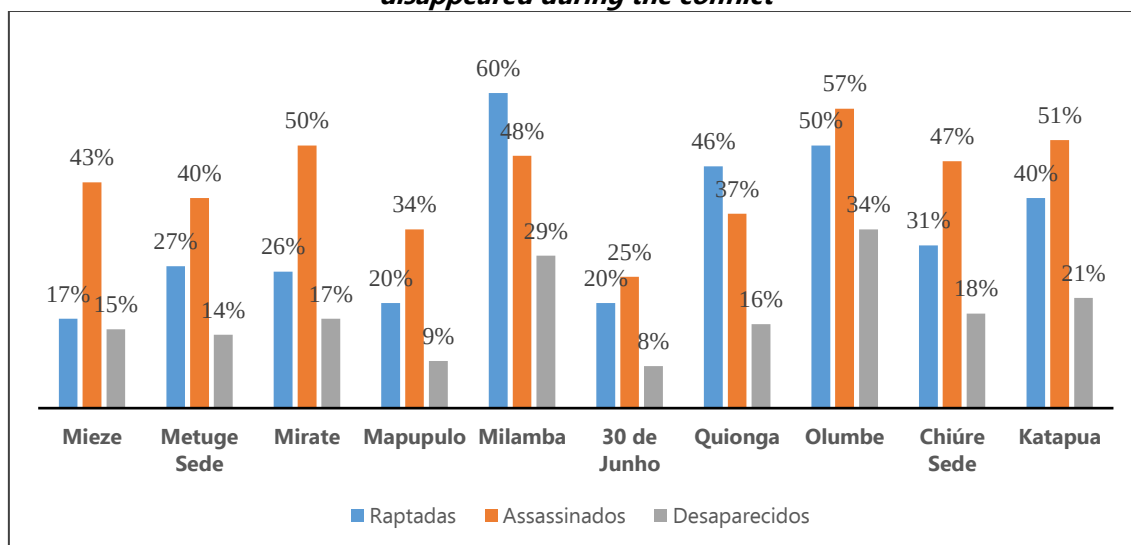
The greater openness of the Government of Mozambique to issue credentials for the movement of humanitarian industry technicians to the north of the province coincides with greater budgetary difficulties of the United Nations organizations. The instability along the N380 road (especially at the Chai administrative post) makes air transport the preferred alternative for agents of international organizations. The security policies of non-governmental organizations lead them to prefer to operate in the south of the province, contributing to the asymmetry of distribution of resources illustrated in map 2.

In the North, TotalEnergies remains the main humanitarian partner, which fills not only the vacuum of the State, but also the absence of non-governmental organizations. Through Pamoja Tunaweza, TotalEnergies has partnered with several organizations, mostly from outside the region, that contribute to humanitarian and economic assistance, stabilizing the region and improving the organization's image in the region. Médecins Sans Frontières stands out from other organizations for its ability to hire local employees, the importance it attaches to community acceptance, and for being generally among the first to penetrate risk areas, where no other organization goes.

7. THE RECONSTITUTION OF THE SOCIAL FABRIC AND EXERCISE OF CITIZENSHIP

The war affected profoundly the social fabric, being responsible for the separation or breakdown of many families. The psychological traumas are evident. Many interviewees are visibly emotional when they talk about family members. Children panic at booms and busts, and several interlocutors report insomnia problems. Almost half of respondents (43%) revealed that they had family members "*murdered*" during the conflict. About a third (34%) of respondents revealed the existence of at least one family member "*abducted*", with 18% revealing the existence of "*missing*" family members. The percentage of abductions was particularly evident in the Milamba neighbourhood in Mocímboa da Praia and in the village of Monjante (Olumbi administrative post, Palma district), affecting 60% and 50% of the families surveyed, respectively (see Graph 4). The existence of "murdered" and "missing" members was most evident in Monjane, precisely in the vicinity of Afungi, affecting 57% and 34% of respondents, respectively. According to reports, many individuals died in the woods, during periods of disorganized escape, victims of murder, illness or exhaustion. Others drowned while escaping by sea. Several villagers claim that an untold number of individuals have perished over the vastness of the territory, noting that "the woods are full of cemeteries." Respondents attribute the responsibility not only to the rebels but also to the overzealousness of the Defence and Security Forces, especially in the months following the attack on Palma. The low salaries of the military, the non-mastery of local languages and the difficulties of communication with the populations, created a scenario conducive to abuse. Many villagers reported episodes of trespassing on property, looting, threats or extortion of monetary values on charges of terrorism, or disappearance of individuals at the hands of the military. Despite a decrease in pressure on the population, compared to the years 2020 and 2021, an environment of mistrust persists. In early June 2023, three residents of Mocímboa da Praia were murdered by agents of the Rapid Intervention Unit (Yussuf, 12.06.2023). The Governor of the Province was requested in an emergency to calm the tension. The fact that he was accompanied by agents of the Defence and Security Forces provoked great popular discontent. Eyewitnesses report that many attendees withdrew from the event, with words of dissatisfaction.

Table 4:
Percentage of respondents who have a family member abducted, murdered or disappeared during the conflict



Local civil society organizations, which could play an important role in defending the interests of producers, parents, human rights, budget monitoring, among others, are highly weakened. Many members remain dispersed throughout the province and decapitalized, and the headquarters of the organizations are destroyed. Civil society support mechanisms have been more focused on providing services to the local population and entrepreneurs, rather than strengthening the institutional capacity of local organizations. The isolation of the northeast of the province and the reduced news coverage removes visibility to the work of NGOs. The traumas of war, the absence of justice institutions and the obstacles to rebuilding the rule of law increase the fears of exploitation of politically sensitive human rights issues.

In the city of Pemba, a distinction between humanitarian organizations is consolidated. Based in villas in the upscale neighbourhood of Maringanha, international organizations (such as OCHA, WFP, IOM, UNOPS, UNHCR) stand out, with budgets financed by the United Nations and the capacity to recruit foreign technicians. Based in or around the cement neighbourhood, local organizations face reduced institutional capacity and budgetary difficulties.

The reduced relationship with local organizations is explained by different factors. Firstly, the reduced capacity of local organizations to fit into the structure of the United Nations, namely understanding humanitarian rules, organizing human resources, designing proposals for fundraising or developing *procurement* systems with internationally recognized standards. The Forum of Civil Society Organizations of Cabo Delgado (FOCADE) is excluded from this process, passively waiting for opportunities. Secondly, for many years, the emergency situation has focused international partners on assisting the population, not giving the necessary attention to the transfer of knowledge and skills to local organizations. There are also problems of political constraint within local organizations, which leads to question their independence and impartiality. Several prominent members of non-governmental organizations are civil servants or members of the ruling party, easily conditioned or pressured by the government. The government does not shy away from pressuring the cadres of humanitarian organizations themselves, particularly during food distribution. In previous years, WFP faced obstacles in preparing the lists of beneficiaries, based on its observation and contact with the population.

The lists, prepared by the local structures, were made available by the District Planning and Infrastructure Services, and there were numerous suspicions of manipulation.

After five years of humanitarian emergency, a timid partnership between international institutions and some local organizations begins. However, partnerships are unevenly structured. Cadres from local organizations travel to the field without the same security conditions, often facing agitated populations and endangering their physical integrity. Among the local organizations, a discourse of underutilization of the province's human resources by international humanitarian organizations is consolidated, and of inequality in relation to the organizations of the South of the country, aka "Maputo".

In the north of the province, there is an intensification of community meetings on issues of surveillance, cleanliness and call for production. The expectation of obtaining concrete support is the main motivation for adherence of the population, which tends to demobilize when it is realized that the meeting will not have direct benefits. Some participants present their opinions, often in a contesting way, but the majority of the population adopts a passive attitude. The high levels of illiteracy make it difficult to understand the subjects presented, making the meetings merely spaces for the presentation of communiqués, in a top-down way.

With the beginning of the voter registration period, partisan political themes are being introduced. In Montepuez, the arrival of government technicians at the Mapupulo resettlement centre, raising awareness of voter registration, generated attitudes of resistance. Videos circulating on social media show young Makonde singing in protest, in their mother tongue "*we live in lies. In our farms there are conflicts, and you just sit there.*" At the administrative post of Ocuá, in a largely rural territory, there was a voter registration post and vehicles with STAE stickers, dozens of kilometres from the nearest municipality (Chiúre). It is expected that the war will be heavily politicized during the elections, especially in Mocímboa da Praia, aggravating social tensions. Similar to the 2019 elections, the warring parties will tend to blame the adversary for the armed conflict and destruction it brought.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The massive return of the population to the Northeast of Cabo Delgado takes place in a scenario of generalized absence of the State, expressed in the precariousness of public services and the impotence of civil servants. Deeply discouraged by low wages and working conditions, civil servants are also victims of the armed conflict, with a small budget for the enormous needs.

Geographically, the vacuum of the State has been filled by different groups of actors. In the northern part of the province, TotalEnergies has circumvented the bureaucratic and security obstacles imposed on humanitarian organizations by hiring a group of private and non-governmental organizations that assist small farmers, fishermen and cattle raisers. By generating jobs and acquiring local production, TotalEnergies was able to create a circular economy around Afungi, with visible consequences for the socio-economic integration of the territory. In the southern part of the province, the void of the State was filled by numerous non-governmental organizations, strongly concentrated in the Pemba-Montepuez-Balama axis. This set of international organizations has exerted palliative effects on the displaced populations, stabilizing a corridor for the extraction of precious stones and graphite for world markets.

Between the two territories, a ring of insecurity persists, around which rebel groups circulate. Although less numerous, they rehearse new tactics of relationship with the population (praying together and distributing money) and continue to threaten the North-South circulation and affecting the economy of the province.

Avoiding direct confrontation with the Rwandans, who have gained the trust and collaboration of the population, and proved militarily effectiveness, the rebels remain in the woods of Macomia, Muidumbe and Nangade. In these territories they exploit the weaknesses of the Mozambican defence and security forces or the SAMIM troops, known for not mastering the local languages and for the slow response in the persecution of the insurgents. Low salaries and delays in wage payments to soldiers, combined with low levels of discipline and organization, increase the risks of abuse of populations, reducing their collaboration, to the benefit of the insurgents.

The Mozambican State thus faces the enormous difficulty of building strong public institutions, starting with the defence and security forces themselves. One of the strategies adopted has been the reinforcement of local militias, mostly composed of Makonde. It is a functional response due to the motivation of the respective members to defend their own territory, their previous military experience, their knowledge of the forests, languages and local people, which guarantee them the trust and collaboration of the population. It is a more economical option for the State, not entailing logistical costs, salaries and compensation, monetizing the costs in subsidies to former combatants. Finally, the attribution of military power to a group historically loyal to the ruling party, with which clientelist relations are established, ensures government control over the militias.

However, the conferral of military power to a Christian, Makonde group, loyal to the Frelimo party fuels tensions between rival groups, particularly on the coast, historically antagonized with the central government. If the establishment of militias constituted a rapid and functional response, it is incapable of solving structural and long-term problems related to the difficult challenge of building a nation-State, or to the inability of the State to guarantee the security of economic investments and populations.

The greater ease of access of journalists and researchers to the Northeast of the province allowed the collection of reports, especially on the dark events of the years 2020 and 2021. The populations speak openly about the violence of young insurgents, but also about the overzealousness and opportunism of young State soldiers. Resulting from a two-month journalistic investigation, journalist Alex Perry indicated (in publication) the number of 1,377 fatalities, allegedly during the Palma attack of March 2021.

In continuity with its communication strategy, the Government of Mozambique remains silent about these macabre figures, which would represent one of the biggest massacres around a major extractive project. The same attitude is adopted by TotalEnergies, both in the version of Jean-Christophe Rufin's report on the human rights situation around Afungi, released to the press, and in the non-reaction to journalistic investigation. Aware of the great media attention that any official communication will merit, the company adopts a laconic attitude towards any sensitive subject. Its communication strategy is confused with the government's, fuelling mistrust around the direct or moral, responsibility of the multinational company. Like in the 16-year war, the violation of human rights in the conflict with al-Shabaabs is one of the biggest taboo topics on the part of the authorities.

While it is true that the improvement of the socio-economic situation in the region may somehow erase the memory of injustice and violence, the resumption of economic projects will revive new and old ghosts of the past. There are no significant reforms in terms of improving public services, protecting local youth from competition in the labour market, recognizing ethnolinguistic groups on the coast, opening up channels of participation and access to justice, or strengthening the rule of law. The inevitable arrival of international cadres will increase social differentiation and inflation of essential goods and services, with consequences for the poorest. The recent history of the region allows us to conclude that the conditions will be met for the outbreak of labour stoppages, petty thefts and riots, increasing the capacity of seduction of various social fringes to violent conduct, under a secular or religious ideology.

The existence of Rwandan troops protecting economically strategic areas (gas and graphite production) makes international capital comfortable with a low-intensity conflict, reducing the respective pressure to carry out deep reforms, including the construction of spaces for dialogue for peacebuilding.

In this scenario, the following suggestions are considered relevant:

- Symbolic recognition of the victims of the conflict, through the construction of memorials, conducting independent investigations, psychological assistance and compensation to the victims' relatives.
- Training of local civil society organizations, strengthening them in matters of humanitarian support, governance, monitoring of the State budget, elections, issues of human rights violations and conflict resolution;
- Priority to local organizations when establishing partnerships with United Nations organizations or TotalEnergies;
- Support to the Mozambican State in the provision of services to citizens, particularly in terms of health, education and rural extension;
- Development agencies support for the training and hiring of teachers, based on meritocrat criteria, investing in school inspection and performance awards;
- Strong investment in family planning, through incentives to retain young students in schools, including through the allocation of school meals;
- Strengthening the process of coordination of humanitarian and development aid, ensuring a greater socio-territorial balance;
- Administrative decentralization of the territory and strengthening of the rule of law, through the strengthening of the Attorney General's Office, the courts, the National Commission on Human Rights, as well as the de-partisanship of the State.

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