

# Mozambique News Agency

## AIM Reports

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## President Nyusi announces restrictive measures

President Filipe Nyusi on 15 July announced a series of new restrictive measures intended to reduce the spread of the Covid-19 respiratory disease and prevent any possible collapse of the Mozambican health system. Mozambique is now in the grip of the third wave of the pandemic, which was proving more severe and more lethal than either of the first two waves, and President Nyusi pointed out that in the first 15 days of July, 18,511 new cases had been recorded, which was three times higher than the entire month of June.

President Nyusi warned of the possibility that intensive care units could run out of beds and oxygen for patients, and out of personal protective equipment for health workers. There was also only a limited supply of the PCR (polymerase chain reaction) tests – the standard tests used to determine whether a person is infected with the coronavirus that causes Covid-19.

“We don’t want our country to reach this stage where people are dying for lack of oxygen”, declared the President. “The pandemic is far from its end”, he warned, and the victims are not just the elderly, but also young people and even children.

“We are all called upon to preserve our health and our economy”, he urged, and that meant obeying the basic preventive measures, including isolation of those who test positive for the virus.

In recent weeks there had been “general non-compliance” with preventive measures with citizens going to parties or playing football. Wearing masks in public places is obligatory but television reports have shown people going about their business without masks. Only in the last few days have the police begun to crack down on people who are not wearing masks.

President Nyusi announced that all the existing restrictions remain in place but will be tightened. The overnight curfew is extended by an hour, beginning at 21.00 rather than 22.00 and lasting until 04.00. The curfew now extends to all cities and towns.

All religious ceremonies, conferences and meetings are suspended. All private social events are banned except for weddings. A maximum of 20 people can attend a wedding, but there can be no parties or receptions afterwards. Meetings in public or private institutions are allowed, but attendance must not exceed 15 people in closed spaces or 30 in the open air. State meetings or events may take place if duly authorised and with no more than 80 people in attendance.

The number of people who may attend funerals has been reduced to 20, but if the deceased died of Covid-19 no more than ten mourners may attend.

No events can be held in casinos, cinemas, or theatres. Museums and galleries remain open, but no more than 20 per cent of their capacity may attend. All gymnasiums are closed, as are public swimming pools. Pools in hotels may continue to function, but only for guests and at no more than 20 per cent of their capacity.

Except for essential services, public institutions will only be open from 08.00 to 14.00 (rather than the normal closing time of 15.30). The private sector is encouraged to follow the same timetable.

Trading hours are reduced. Shopping centres should open at 09.00 and close at 16.00 from Monday to Saturday, and from 09.00 to 13.00 on Sundays and public holidays. Bottle stores, and other premises licensed to sell alcohol, must close at 13.00 from Monday to Saturday and must remain closed on Sundays. The opening hours for restaurants are from 06.00 to 18.00 every day. Stalls selling food may operate between 06.00 and 17.00, but the complete ban on bars, stalls and kiosks selling alcohol remains in place. The opening hour for bakeries are from 05.00 to 18.00.

President Nyusi also announced a ban on face-to-face teaching in primary, secondary, and higher education in the Greater Maputo Metropolitan Area, Xai-Xai, Inhambane, Beira, Chimoio and Tete. This measure does not affect anywhere north of the Zambezi, which is less affected by Covid-19.

All pre-school education will be closed for at least 30 days. Creches and nurseries had been closed for over a year but were allowed to re-open in late June.

President Nyusi also announced that all arrivals in Mozambique must present a negative PCR test taken within 72 hours prior to departure.

To avoid queues building up at the offices which issue documents, the validity of all personal documents, except passports, has been extended to 30 August.

President Nyusi explained that the purpose of most of the measures is to prevent the gathering of sizeable numbers of people. The measures will last for 30 days but may be reviewed after 15 days.

### **Government acquires 11 million vaccine doses**

President Nyusi also revealed that the government has acquired eleven million more doses of vaccine against Covid-19, which should reach the country by the end of August.

This, he said, would make it possible to step up the vaccination campaign so that by the end of the year the majority of eligible Mozambicans will have been vaccinated. “This mass vaccination will allow our country to make a safe and gradual transition to a situation close to normality”, said President Nyusi, stressing that the success of this transition will depend on the collaboration and solidarity of all Mozambicans.

To date, Mozambique has received 1.402 million doses of vaccine – 384,000 doses from the Covax initiative coordinated by the World Health Organisation (WHO), 500,000 purchased by Mozambican private companies, 260,000 donated by the Chinese government and the Chinese armed forces, and 100,000 donated by the Indian government.

With President Nyusi’s announcement, the number of vaccine doses available will reach just over 12.4 million. At two doses each, that is enough to vaccinate fully 6.2 million people. The government’s target is to vaccinate 17 million people by the end of the year.

President Nyusi did not say where the 11 million doses would come from, or whether they were purchased or donated.

### **Hospitals under strain due to Covid-19**

The third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic is putting increasing strains on the capacity of Mozambican hospitals, the Deputy National Director of Public Health, Benigna Matsinhe, warned on 19 July. Speaking at a Maputo press conference, she said that Maputo city has 583 intensive care beds for Covid-19 patients, of which 334 (57 per cent) are currently occupied. The situation is much worse in Maputo province (essentially the city of Matola) which has 42 patients hospitalised but only 40 appropriate beds.

In the centre of the country, in Sofala province, 126 beds are available, of which 44 (35 per cent) are occupied, while in Tete. 22 of the available 70 beds are occupied – an occupation rate of 31 per cent.

Matsinhe said the situation is already bad “and we could witness a serious situation in the coming month of August” unless “collective action is taken to block the current speed of the pandemic in our country”.

In the first 19 days of July, Matsinhe added, there were 24,381 new cases of Covid-19, 1,132 new hospitalisations and 260 deaths. These figures are much higher than those recorded in an equivalent period at the start of the second wave of the disease when there had been 9,628 new cases, 419 hospitalisations, and 87 deaths. Comparing the two periods, the number of new cases had increased by 153.2 per cent, of hospitalisations by 170.2 per cent, and deaths by 198.9 per cent.

### **Members of Olympic delegation test positive for Covid-19**

Three members of the Mozambican delegation to the Tokyo Olympic Games have tested positive for the coronavirus that causes the Covid-19 respiratory disease, according to a statement from the Mozambique Olympic Committee (COM).

The COM said the three positive cases were detected during the daily tests which all members of the delegation must take. All three cases are asymptomatic and are being monitored by the medical team that is assisting the delegation.

The COM did not name the three people concerned and said that their participation in the Tokyo Olympics has not yet been compromised, since the period of isolation required by the authorities will probably allow them to obtain a negative test result before departure for Tokyo.

### **“Resident inspector” appointed for Standard Bank**

The Bank of Mozambique has appointed a senior member of its staff, Zaitina Raul Chilale, as resident inspector of Standard Bank, following the recent decision to suspend this bank from all foreign currency operations.

According to a statement from the central bank, Chilale’s tasks will include monitoring the plan of action drawn up by the Standard Bank shareholders and “to follow and analyse developments in the bank’s system of governance and internal control”. She will attend the relevant meetings of the bank’s management bodies.

The statement from the Bank of Mozambique added that the Standard Bank shareholders “are continuing to collaborate in order to implement the plan of action to correct the irregularities identified”. The central bank added that “all operations within the banking system are taking place normally”.

Commentators claim that Chilale will effectively be running the bank, which is mostly owned by South African capital, at least until a definitive new Chief Executive Officer can be appointed.

After an inspection of Standard Bank’s activities, the Bank of Mozambique accused it of a range of offences, including fraudulent manipulation of the exchange rate. In addition to suspension from trading in foreign currency, heavy fines were imposed on the bank and two of its senior officials, CEO Chukwuma Nwokocha, and the director of corporate and investment banking, Domingos Madeira. Nwokocha and Madeira were also banned from holding office in any bank for the next six years.

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This is a condensed version of the AIM daily news service - for details contact pfauvet@live.com

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## Over 825,000 seedlings planted to restore native and exotic species

The Ministry of Land and Environment on 16 July announced that 827,547 seedlings of both native and exotic species of plants were planted across the country between September 2020 and last June, covering 4,609 hectares, with the central province of Zambezia amounting to 36 per cent of the restored area.

Under the forestry management efforts, 45 National Resource Management Committees (CGRN) have been set up in the provinces of Tete and Nampula, and over 11 million meticaís (US\$ 173,000) channelled to 136 benefiting communities. This sum amounts to 20 per cent of the fees paid by forestry operators.

Addressing the opening session of a meeting of her Ministry's Coordinating Council in Maputo, the Minister of Land and Environment, Ivete Maibase, said that, despite the government's push for sustainable use of natural resources, there are challenges ahead to meet that goal.

"We are fully aware that the progress we have achieved is far from satisfying our ambition, therefore the meeting must generate and harmonise technical and administrative procedures for successful implementation of the decentralisation package," Maibase said.

Regarding the inspection and quality of environmental control, she said the ministry has concluded establishing the provincial delegations of the National Agency for Environmental Quality Control (AQUA), across the country.

Those delegations will strengthen the capacity to inspect, audit and monitor environmental quality especially in the implementation of development projects intended to reduce vulnerability to climate risks and natural disasters, added Maibase.

The newly created provincial delegations have inspected 490 social and economic interests and imposed 70 fines amounting to over 77 million meticaís (over US\$1.2 million).

Across the country, she added, 1,264 forestry inspections have been carried out which imposed 887 fines amounting to over 118 million meticaís, and the seizure of 5.4 million cubic metres of illegally logged timber.

She also highlighted the return of 66 containers loaded with timber out of 76 which in December had been illegally exported to China from the Port of Pemba, in the northern province of Cabo Delgado.

After the incident, she said, Mozambican authorities launched diplomatic contacts, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a bid to have the remaining units returned to the country.

"We believe that from this process, which ensured the return of 66 of the containers full of timber, the others will also be returned."

## USAID rehabilitates Bilibiza Agrarian Institute

The United States Government, through the US Agency for International Development (USAID), has rehabilitated the Bilibiza Agrarian Institute, in the northern Mozambican province of Cabo Delgado.

A press release from the US Embassy in Maputo on 19 July stated that the rehabilitation covered several blocks of the Institute's campus making it possible to welcome back 300 students after the Institute closed following a terrorist attack against the campus in January 2020. Now, says the Embassy, the students enjoy a quality education that will give them the knowledge and skills to work in the agricultural sector.

The small town of Bilibiza is in the district of Quissanga, which was ravaged by the jihadists in early 2020. To allow the Institute to reopen, it was moved entirely to Chiure district in the south of the province which has been untouched by terrorism.

The rehabilitation and resumption of classes are the first steps in the longer-term recovery of the Bilibiza Agrarian Institute. The Institute also plans to use the surrounding land as agricultural demonstration plots, so the students can complement their skills outside of the classroom.

In January 2020, terrorist groups attacked the district of Quissanga, in the central part of the Cabo Delgado province, where they raided the school facilities in the town of Bilibiza, Chiure district has thus become a safe haven. Before the attack, it was the primary training school for agricultural technicians in the province and was a source of pride for the local community and the region.

The government provided the Institute with an unused facility in Chiure. The buildings needed repairs, which prevented the Institute from reopening for more than a year. USAID's "Tuko Pamoja" program, which supports livelihoods in Cabo Delgado, worked with the Institute to complete rehabilitation by July, just in time for the school to reopen its doors to students.

Established in 1982, the school has trained thousands of graduates from Cabo Delgado who are now working in both public and the private sector, where they have introduced farmers to improved agricultural techniques and have provided guidance to local communities on how to improve their agricultural yields.

The Embassy says that the US is investing more than US\$100 million in Cabo Delgado for a wide range of community resilience and humanitarian assistance programs. In collaboration with the Mozambican authorities, the US Government provides more than US\$500 million in annual assistance to improve the quality of education and healthcare, promote economic prosperity, and support the country's overall development.

## Kenmare sets record for ilmenite production

The Dublin and London listed company Kenmare Resources, which operates the Moma titanium minerals mine on the coast of the northern province of Nampula, on 14 July has announced that it set a record for production of ilmenite in the second quarter of this year.

In a statement, the company noted that it produced 41 per cent more heavy mineral concentrate than in the same period last year and that the higher grade and volume resulted in the extraction of 283,000 tonnes of ilmenite – a 35 per cent increase.

The other two minerals extracted from the mine also showed increases over the same quarter in 2020: zircon production increased by 28 per cent to 14,900 tonnes and rutile increased by 47 per cent to 2,200 tonnes.

According to Kenmare's managing director, Michael Carvill, "market conditions for ilmenite, and titanium feedstocks in general, remained strong in the second quarter of 2021 with pricing strengthening quarter on quarter. The outlook for zircon has also continued to improve, with price increases during the quarter and continuing to date".

Kenmare also revealed that it is taking measures to protect its staff and local community from the effects of Covid-19. It noted that the number of cases at Moma had fallen from 41 people in isolation in April to zero by late May. However, the number of people isolating has now increased to fifteen and the company has expressed concern at the rise in southern Africa of the more transmissible Delta variant of the coronavirus that causes Covid-19

It added that "protecting our people and the communities in which we operate has always been Kenmare's highest priority. In addition to the various physical distancing and hygiene protocols, and testing procedures, Kenmare has been working with industry partners and the government of Mozambique to acquire, distribute and administer vaccines. The vaccines are now on the way to site and vaccinations of the mine workforce and local communities are expected to start later this month".

The Moma mine produces ilmenite (titanium iron oxide), rutile (titanium dioxide) and zircon (zirconium silicate). Ilmenite and rutile are used to make white pigments for paints, paper, and plastic. Titanium can be extracted from these ores and used to manufacture metallic parts where lightweight and high strength are needed. Zircon is used for abrasive and insulating purposes.

## MRG Metals confirms very high-grade minerals at Nhacutse

The Australian based mining company MRG Metals on 16 July announced that samples taken from its concession at Nhacutse, which lies in its Corridor South project in the southern province of Gaza, confirm that Nhacutse contains very high-grade heavy mineral sands.

Seventeen samples were taken that show an estimated 140 million cubic metres of ground with over five per

cent total heavy mineral content. According to the company's chair, Andrew Van Der Zwan, this means that "MRG is confident that Nhacutse could deliver a significantly larger very high-grade resource than we were originally targeting".

He added, "given the depth of the resource that the drilling is detailing, we could be looking at a 200 million tonnes high-grade resource at Nhacutse".

MRG Metals will now launch a tender to find an independent company to calculate a formal Mineral Resource Estimate. The company also announced that a mineralogical study of the samples will be reported shortly (in Mozambique, heavy mineral sands are mined for their titanium and zircon content).

Following the announcement, shares in the company on the Australian Securities Exchange jumped by 12.5 per cent.

## Minibus drivers on strike in Pemba

Dozens of drivers of mini-buses (known colloquially as "chapas") went on strike on 19 July in the northern city of Pemba, in protest at what they called "excessive inspection" of their vehicles by the traffic police.

According to a report on the television station STV, the chapa drivers blocked one of the main avenues in central Pemba and prevented any vehicles that had not joined the strike from circulating. "We paralysed our activities because the traffic police are always carrying out operations directed against the chapas", one of the chapa drivers, Jose Guambe, told STV "systematically our vehicles are taken to the police command, and they cannot leave without paying 2,000 meticaís (about US\$32)".

The strike disrupted the city, as people who had boarded chapas found that they were unable to complete their journey. At several of the city's bus stops, long queues built up. Eventually, the police ended the blockade of the main avenue and dispersed the drivers.

The police had a radically different version of events from the one given by the strikers. "Unfortunately, many of these transport operators don't have licences, and that's what caused the demonstration", said Ernesto Madungue, the spokesperson of the Cabo Delgado Provincial Police Command.

The 2,000 meticaís, he stated, was not a fine, but a bribe. "A driver tried to corrupt one of our agents with about 2,000 meticaís because he was unable to show his licence", said Madungue. He warned the chapa drivers that, in order to transport passengers, they must possess a public service driving licence. Furthermore "they must check the mechanical conditions of their vehicles and, above all, they must ensure that their vehicles are not overcrowded, and respect the limits imposed by the measures against Covid-19".

"Our operation will continue", he promised, "and we shall not tolerate illegalities on the roads which often endanger the lives of citizens".

Only one person, the driver who tried to bribe a police agent, was detained, and traffic returned to normal in central Pemba after about an hour.

## **South African violence will damage SADC region, warns President Nyusi**

President Filipe Nyusi, in his capacity as the current chairperson of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), has warned that rioting and looting in South Africa may have knock-on effects throughout the region.

In his message, President Nyusi said that SADC is deeply concerned at the loss of lives and indiscriminate destruction of property in the riots, sparked off by supporters of former President Jacob Zuma, protesting at his 15-month jail sentence for contempt of court.

The riots “are not just a threat to human life”, said President Nyusi, “but they also generate instability, throttle economic growth, amplify risks and hinder the return of the investment that is so necessary”. SADC therefore “vehemently condemns these attacks on property, businesses and people”.

“Given the strategic position of South Africa in the regional economy”, President Nyusi continued, “if the current agitation is not brought under control, it will have a negative impact on the chain of supplies of essential goods for the region”.

He warned that the rioting “will reduce job opportunities, and threaten vital infrastructures, not only in South Africa but in the SADC region as a whole”. Should the violence persist, he added, then the recovery projected for the region and the forecast growth rate of two per cent in 2021 and 3.2 per cent in 2022 “may be beyond reach. This damage will doubtless increase, which will be a major setback to the efforts of the region to rebuild economies after the coronavirus pandemic”.

President Nyusi praised the efforts of the South African government to protect the population from the rioters and urged South African citizens and their leaders to embark on “constructive dialogue in order to solve the current crisis”. SADC, he concluded, “reaffirms its solidarity with the people and government of South Africa in their continual efforts to restore the rule of law, peace and stability”.

## **President Nyusi discusses fight against terrorism with Blinken**

President Filipe Nyusi on 14 July discussed the fight against terrorism in the northern province of Cabo Delgado with the US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken. According to State Department spokesperson Ned Price, in their phone call, “the Secretary and President reaffirmed the strength and importance of US-Mozambique relations and our joint commitment to countering ISIS”. Blinken also “underscored US support for Mozambique’s efforts against Covid-19, building on our long-standing investments in the country’s health sector. The Secretary expressed a desire for further collaboration on economic development and governance”.

President Nyusi’s office released further details, saying that the two men had discussed the functioning of the newly established Agency for the Development of the North (ADIN), “and the involvement of SADC and Rwandan forces to support Mozambique in the fight against terrorism”.

President Nyusi and Blinken also discussed bilateral relations between Mozambique and the US, regarding them as better than ever before. The phone call was an opportunity to review various economic questions, notably trade and investment, including the new aid package that will be provided by the US Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC).

At the end of the meeting, Blinken expressed his solidarity with Mozambique in the fight against terrorism and his condolences for the lives lost at terrorist hands in Cabo Delgado.

## **UNICEF needs \$80 million for Mozambique operations**

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) on 12 July lamented that it has only received US\$16.3 million in donations to provide life-saving and life-sustaining services for children in Mozambique.

In June, UNICEF increased its annual Humanitarian Action for Children appeal for Mozambique to US\$96.5 million due to escalating needs, particularly in the northern province of Cabo Delgado. However, it has so far this year received less than seventeen per cent of the appeal, although when taking into account funds carried over from previous years the funding gap stands at 69 per cent.

The areas most neglected by UNICEF’s funders are its nutrition programme which has a funding gap of 89 per cent and its Education programme which still needs to receive 87 per cent of its budget.

UNICEF expressed its gratitude to all its donors, who include the governments of Canada, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Italy, and the United Kingdom. However, it warned that significant needs remain for all of its ongoing emergency programmes and that “without the required funding, UNICEF will be unable to provide access to safe water, health and nutrition services, learning opportunities, critical child protection support and support to survivors of gender-based violence”.

Turning its focus to Cabo Delgado, where violence by Islamist terrorists has caused enormous population movements, UNICEF warns that 732,227 people have been displaced. Over 90 per cent of these are still in Cabo Delgado, and the remainder are scattered over four other northern and central provinces. UNICEF points out that 46 per cent of the internally displaced are children, with 2,733 identified as unaccompanied or separated.

Parts of Cabo Delgado have been under attack from Islamist terrorists since October 2017, forcing people from their homes and destroying livelihoods.