

Summary

Mozambique is experiencing a turbulent period, with post-election protests that erupted on October 21 turning violent as authorities have used brute force, including live ammunition, resulting in at least 30 casualties and many more injuries and arrests. In turn, protesters have blocked roads, damaged property, and engaged in clashes with the police, particularly in Maputo. With prospects for de-escalation looking slim, the situation will likely continue to deteriorate, following opposition candidate Mondlane's call for new protests on November 27.

Recent events and developments

The results of the October 9 general elections have sparked waves of intense protests across Mozambique as the ruling and re-elected Frelimo party has been accused of fraud. The protests have gained amplitude on November 7, encouraged by the opposition. Leading up to this, disruptions to internet traffic and restrictions to social media and messaging platforms were reported nationwide. As thousands of people gathered in Maputo and other major cities (e. g. Nampula and Zambezia), police used force and fired teargas, rubber bullets, as well as live ammunition to disperse the demonstrators. According to various estimates, between 30 and 50 people have been killed since the breakout of the protests, including at least 10 children. Although initially the demonstrations were primarily peaceful, protesters have since responded to the crackdowns by burning tires, blocking roads, damaging property, throwing objects at the police and clashing with them. On November 15, the government officially banned protests. On the same day, people started banging on pots and pans every night as a way to communicate their rejection of the election results. On November 27, opposition candidate Venâncio Mondlane called for a new round of general protests. As a result, roads in Maputo were blocked and public transport was disrupted. This includes central arteries such as the 24 de Julho, Eduardo Mondlane, and Guerra Popular avenues. Authorities attempted to unblock the roads using armored vehicles, however this was unsuccessful.

Impact assessment

Post-electoral unrest and violence seem to be on the rise in Mozambique and are almost certain to continue escalating in the coming days, given Mondlane's call for new protests. Neither the opposition nor the government appear prepared to back down on their stances and Frelimo, in power since 1975, is unlikely to loosen its grip. Furthermore, Mondlane has previously stated that one of the conditions for protests to end is for him to be proclaimed the winner of the elections, which is unlikely to happen. Thus, it is highly likely that the country will see more roadblocks, acts of vandalism, disruptions, and large-scale demonstrations, especially in Maputo. The headquarters of Frelimo and of the National Electoral Commission are prominent targets, located near Kenneth Kaunda Avenue and Joaquin Chissano Avenue respectively. Nampula and Zambezia are also likely to become hotspots. The government's firm stance that unrest will be met by force suggests that security forces will continue to crack down on protests. This can then promote a violent reaction from the protesters' side, resulting in further clashes, injuries, and even deaths, as already seen during the past five weeks of unrest. While foreigners are unlikely to be targeted, the overall situation in the country is extremely volatile and the probability of encountering an unsafe situation is quite high. Additionally, amidst the unrest, authorities are likely to be on high alert and may subject travelers to increased scrutiny and security checks. Access to information and communications are expected to be restricted during this period.

Advice from Forth Global

- Ensure that all employees travelling to Mozambique receive a three-day HEAT training prior to deployment.
- Avoid crowds and demonstrations and refrain from expressing politically charged opinions.
- Monitor media and local sources for updates on the situation and potential escalations.
- Plan alternative routes in case of roadblocks or traffic disruptions, especially in Maputo.
- Prepare for potential Internet disruptions and ensure alternative means of communication.

Customized advice

Please contact us for specific advice:

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