



Responsible Security and Human Rights

Mozambique's Extractive Sector

2025 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES



National leadership and multi-stakeholder commitment to responsible security and human rights. Source: CDD.

Maputo | May 2026

Executive Summary

This Annual Report presents the progress achieved during 2025 in the implementation of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR) in Mozambique. The reporting period marked an important stage in consolidating the country's commitment following its official admission to the Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI) in May 2024. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs (MJACR), with the Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CDD) serving as the National Secretariat and technical support from the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), the initiative continued to strengthen institutional coordination, multi-stakeholder dialogue and the integration of human rights considerations into security governance, particularly in the extractive sector.

The implementation of the Voluntary Principles took place against a complex national context characterised by persistent insecurity in Cabo Delgado, post-electoral political tensions, the gradual resumption of strategic extractive investments and increasing expectations from communities regarding transparency, inclusion and accountability. While signs of economic recovery and renewed investor confidence emerged, security-related incidents, community grievances and governance challenges continued to demonstrate the need for stronger mechanisms to prevent conflict, manage security risks and safeguard human rights in areas affected by large-scale natural resource projects.

Throughout the year, significant progress was made in strengthening the institutional architecture supporting the Voluntary Principles. Regular meetings of the National Working Group and the Cabo Delgado Provincial Technical Working Group provided structured platforms for government institutions, extractive companies, civil society organisations, development partners and security actors to exchange information, assess emerging risks and coordinate responses. Dedicated meetings of the Government and Civil Society Pillars further enhanced internal coordination, while consultations with private security companies created opportunities to discuss operational challenges, promote alignment with international standards, including the International Code of Conduct Association (ICoCA), and inform ongoing policy and regulatory reforms.

Capacity development remained a central pillar of implementation. Training activities were delivered to government officials, security forces, community leaders, civil society organisations and private sector representatives across Cabo Delgado, including Montepuez, Balama, Palma and Pemba. These interventions strengthened stakeholders' understanding of responsible security practices, human rights obligations and conflict-sensitive approaches to business operations. The programme also expanded its thematic scope by integrating gender perspectives through a baseline study on the impacts of extractive activities on women and vulnerable groups, complemented by specialised training on gender, business and human rights.

The report highlights that the implementation of the Voluntary Principles has contributed to improving cooperation among public institutions, companies, civil society and communities, fostering greater trust, promoting preventive dialogue and encouraging the adoption of internationally recognised standards in security management. At the same time, the initiative has strengthened the foundations for the development of Mozambique's forthcoming National Action Plan on Security and Human Rights, which will be essential for fulfilling the country's commitments as an Engaged Government Member of the Voluntary Principles Initiative.

Despite these achievements, the report recognises that important challenges remain. Persistent insecurity, limited monitoring capacity in conflict-affected areas, weaknesses in accountability mechanisms, unresolved community grievances and the need for stronger oversight of public and private security providers continue to affect the operating environment. Addressing these challenges will require sustained political commitment, strengthened institutional capacity, enhanced community engagement and continued collaboration among government, business, civil society and international partners.

Overall, the report concludes that 2025 represented a year of institutional consolidation and operational progress for the implementation of the Voluntary Principles in Mozambique. The initiatives undertaken strengthened national ownership of the VPSHR agenda, expanded multi-stakeholder cooperation and laid important foundations for embedding human rights considerations within security governance in the extractive sector. Continued implementation of the report's recommendations will be critical to ensuring that economic development, security and respect for human rights advance together, contributing to sustainable investment, social stability and inclusive development in Mozambique.



High-Level Voluntary Principles Working Group Meeting in Maputo. Source: CDD.

An Implementation Architecture Built on Partnership

The Voluntary Principles were implemented during a period of continued insecurity in Cabo Delgado, renewed extractive investment and growing community demands for transparency, inclusion and accountability. This made a coordinated national and provincial architecture essential.

Mozambique's model combines state leadership with structured participation by companies, civil society and technical partners. This approach recognises that no single institution can manage the human rights risks associated with extractive-sector security on its own.

Government leadership

MJACR anchors policy direction and convenes relevant public institutions, including justice, defence, interior and natural-resource authorities.

Provincial mechanism

The Cabo Delgado Technical Working Group translates national commitments into locally informed action.

CDD Secretariat

CDD convenes stakeholders, documents progress, supports evidence-based advocacy and links national work to communities.

National Working Group

The principal forum for shared analysis, strategic alignment and review of implementation priorities.

Pillar coordination

Government, civil society and company constituencies organise internally and bring clearer positions to collective dialogue.

Technical support

DCAF contributes specialised expertise on security-sector governance, policy development and international good practice.

How the system works

National direction; provincial coordination; district engagement; community feedback; policy response

Meetings were conducted as protected spaces for candid exchange, including through the Chatham House Rule where appropriate. This helped participants discuss operational risks and institutional constraints without weakening collective responsibility.

National Coordination and Policy Dialogue



National Workshop on the Voluntary Principles in Maputo. Source: CDD.

Regular Working Group meetings enabled stakeholders to review progress, align priorities and address emerging concerns. Government participation gave the process political legitimacy, while civil society helped ensure that community experience and human rights risks remained visible. Company engagement brought practical questions about operational security, contractor conduct and risk management into the same forum.

Key advances

- Stronger shared understanding of institutional roles and responsibilities.
- More systematic discussion of security risks in extractive operations.
- A national conversation on oversight of private security providers.
- Closer connection between the Voluntary Principles and Business and Human Rights.
- Greater recognition of gender, vulnerability and community participation as implementation priorities.

High-level events also increased political visibility and brought public decision-makers, business leaders, civil society and international partners into direct conversation. The next phase must convert this dialogue into approved policy instruments, clearer accountability and measurable change.

Building Capacity for Responsible Security



Balama



Palma

Capacity-strengthening activities in Cabo Delgado. Source: CDD.

Training was one of the strongest operational components of 2025. Sessions combined the Voluntary Principles with Business and Human Rights, gender equality, conflict sensitivity and practical risk analysis. Participants included district authorities, members of the security forces, civil society organisations, community leaders and company representatives. This mixed composition allowed participants to examine the same risks from different institutional and community perspectives.

Knowledge

Participants explored international standards, national duties and the responsibilities of companies and security providers.

Inclusion

Gender and the differentiated experiences of women and vulnerable groups were treated as core security questions.

Practice

Case-based exercises connected the principles to operational dilemmas, community concerns, early warning and prevention.

Cooperation

Joint learning reduced institutional distance and created relationships that can support early response.

What capacity building achieved

The trainings strengthened a common vocabulary for discussing security and human rights and clarified the responsibilities of public authorities, companies and security providers. Practical exercises helped local actors identify risks, document concerns, consider safe referral pathways and explore responses based on dialogue rather than force. The activities also strengthened relationships that can support early warning, prevention and follow-up after a complaint or incident.

Community Monitoring and Local Capacity in Cabo Delgado



Balama



Montepuez



Palma

Field activities in Cabo Delgado. Source: CDD.

Cabo Delgado remained the centre of field implementation. The Provincial Technical Working Group used information from Palma and Montepuez to identify and discuss allegations linked to company operations, propose practical responses and formulate recommendations. This monitoring function created a bridge between community concerns, provincial coordination and national decision-making.

Montepuez

Monitoring focused on tensions around industrial and artisanal mining, including reports of disproportionate force, intimidation, inadequate compensation, limited employment opportunities and exclusion from decisions. The 14 May training enabled district authorities, security actors, civil society, community leaders and companies to examine these risks together, strengthen understanding of lawful and proportionate security practice and identify avenues for cooperation, referral and follow-up.

Balama and Palma

In Balama, the 15 May training adapted the Voluntary Principles to local mining realities and used practical exercises to identify community risks and improve cooperation among institutions. In Palma, the 27 May training addressed the LNG context, gender and conflict sensitivity. It also strengthened local capacity to monitor restrictions affecting livelihoods, community access and relations with security providers as operations resumed around Afungi.

Across the three districts, capacity strengthening went beyond awareness. It equipped local actors to recognise risk, document concerns more consistently, protect confidentiality, refer cases to competent institutions and use working-group channels to seek responses. Continued monitoring, accessible complaints mechanisms and regular feedback to communities remain essential.

Results and Emerging Impact



High-Level Event on the Voluntary Principles. Source: CDD.

The most significant result of 2025 was the emergence of a functioning national platform that can connect policy, operational practice and community experience. Although implementation remains incomplete, stakeholders now have stronger relationships, greater shared knowledge and clearer entry points for coordinated action.

Government

Sustained leadership and stronger ownership of the national process.

Civil society

More structured participation in national and provincial dialogue.

Institutions

Stronger links among justice, security, human rights and extractive-sector actors.

Companies

Improved engagement on security risk, responsible practice and community relations.

Communities

Greater awareness of rights and more opportunities to raise concerns.

Policy agenda

Increased attention to private security governance and national action planning.

A realistic assessment

These are foundational results rather than proof that all risks have been resolved. Their value lies in creating the conditions for prevention, accountability and remedy. The next test is whether institutions respond consistently to concerns and whether communities experience tangible improvements in safety, dignity and participation.

Challenges, Opportunities and Priority Recommendations

Persistent challenges

- Delay in approving the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights.
- Interconnected political, social, economic and security pressures.
- Uneven private-sector participation and limited disclosure.
- Community mistrust created by past harm and unmet expectations.
- Gaps in monitoring, accountability and access to remedy.
- Resistance from interests that benefit from opacity or weak oversight.

Strategic opportunities

A National Action Plan on Security and Human Rights can provide clearer direction. Renewed LNG activity creates both urgency and leverage for stronger safeguards. Existing work on conflict transformation, social cohesion, preventing violent extremism and a just energy transition can reinforce implementation if these agendas are coordinated rather than treated separately.

Five priorities

1 Approve policy frameworks

Finalise the Business and Human Rights plan and develop a Security and Human Rights plan.

2 Clarify obligations

Strengthen understanding of constitutional, human rights and humanitarian-law duties.

3 Monitor continuously

Map risks, incidents and responses in Cabo Delgado through credible local mechanisms.

4 Improve risk assessment

Require conflict-sensitive and gender-responsive analysis by companies and authorities.

5 Strengthen independence

Use trusted third-party monitoring and protect safe channels for complaint and remedy.

The Road Ahead



National conference on governance of the private security sector. Source: CDD.

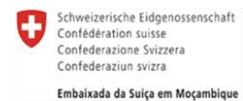
The 2025 experience shows that Mozambique has the institutional basis for a credible Voluntary Principles process. The priority for 2026 is to deepen implementation: move from meetings to tracked commitments, from training to changed practice, and from consultation to visible response and remedy.

Priorities for the next cycle

- Maintain regular national and Cabo Delgado working-group meetings.
- Adopt clear workplans, responsibilities, timelines and progress indicators.
- Expand community-centred monitoring and feedback in extractive districts.
- Deepen engagement with companies and private security providers.
- Advance national action plans and strengthen independent oversight.
- Publish accessible progress updates while protecting sensitive information.

Responsible investment is sustainable only when security protects people, respects rights and earns public trust.

Institutional leadership and support



Prepared by the Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CDD), Secretariat of the National Working Group on the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights in Mozambique.