Mozambique

Rapid Protection Assessment Report

Nabaje - Mocímboa da Praia | May 2026

Key Messages

- Community leaders and affected households reported that approximately 258 households, composed of 1,200 displaced individuals had arrived in the area at the time of assessment, while additional people remained in transit or temporarily sheltering in bush areas due to insecurity and movement constraints.
- The displacement reportedly followed three attacks by Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG) occurring between April and May 2026, with the most severe incident reported on 21 May 2026, resulting in large-scale displacement on 22–23 May. Respondents described that despite several incursions from NSAG elements made during the past six months, the increasing levels of violence seen since April and May have led most of the communities to leave their areas of origin and depart to safer areas in Mocimboa Administrative Post, fearing a worsening scenario. The attacks included physical assaults, threats, killings (unconfirmed), looting, destruction of assets, theft of fishing equipment and boats, and violent attacks against women.
- The affected population is predominantly composed of fishermen households and includes women, men, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, female-headed households, and separated family members. Most households are currently hosted by relatives or members of the local community, placing increasing pressure on already limited resources.

Assessment Overview

A rapid protection assessment was conducted by UNHCR and its partners AVSI and GCR among newly displaced populations who arrived in the neighbourhoods of Milamba and Ntende, of Mocímboa da Praia Administrative Post and nearby communities following repeated attacks affecting Nabaje and surrounding areas in Mocímboa da Praia District.

- **Date:** 29-30 May 2026
- **Location**: Milamba, Ntende, Nandadua and surrounding host communities in Mocímboa da Praia, Mocímboa da Praia District
- **Area of origin:** Nabaje area
- **Methodology:** Focus Group discussions, key informant interviews, and observations conducted with newly displaced households, community leaders, women groups, and host community representatives.

Cover photo: Community discussion with newly displaced households from Nabaje during the rapid protection assessment in Ntende, Mocímboa da Praia District, May 2026. © UNHCR

1. Context and Displacement Overview

According to community leaders, Nabaje and surrounding settlements have experienced recurrent attacks by non-state armed groups in recent months. Three major incidents were reportedly recorded on 20 April, 1 May, and 21 May 2026. The attack of 21 May was described as significantly more violent than previous incidents and reportedly involved direct assaults against civilians, looting of household assets, theft of boats and fishing equipment, and grave physical violence against women.

Following the latest attack, households reportedly organized a collective departure under the guidance of community leaders and moved toward Mocímboa da Praia town and nearby locations within the same administrative post perceived as safer. Many displaced persons travelled on foot over long distances. Some individuals reportedly remained behind to protect agricultural assets, harvest rice, or because physical limitations prevented movement.

Communication with family members remaining in the area of origin remains difficult due to poor network coverage. Some community members continue to move between locations to support relatives who remained behind.

2. Population Profile

Approximately 1,200 displaced individuals, representing 258 Households (mostly incomplete) were reported in Mocímboa da Praia at the time of assessment. Community leaders indicated that additional families may still arrive as movement from the affected areas continues.

As of 30 May, the displaced population was reported to include 433 adult women, 301 adult men, 466 children. Among them 45 women are pregnant, 62 are older persons. One person is reportedly with visual impairment.

Community leaders clarified that the high number of children observed during the assessment largely reflects household composition, with most children arriving together with parents and immediate family members.

Many families are separated and while there is no report of unaccompanied children arriving to the areas, there is risk of future separation as adult family members return to areas of origin in search of food and other belongings to sell. Many have also stayed behind to look after their property or due to vulnerabilities and mobility challenges, were unable to complete the 16 km journey till Mocimboa.

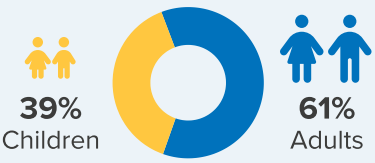
The majority of households originate from fishermen communities and relied primarily on fishing as their main source of livelihood before displacement.

POPULATION PROFILE (As of 30 May 2026)

~1,200 individuals

258 households

Age group



Gender among adults

Vulnerable groups

45 Pregnant women

62 Older persons

3. Protection Risks and Concerns

Exposure to violence and insecurity

Respondents described repeated exposure to insecurity, threats, physical assaults, and looting. There are unconfirmed reports of killings (1), abductions of girls and missing girls during displacement (2). Interviewees highlighted that the severity of the recent attacks may have caused further victims, but no numbers were shared.

Women appear to have been particularly affected during the most recent incident. Community leaders reported cases of women who sustained severe injuries after being beaten and subsequently required hospitalization. Respondents indicated that NSAG elements entered communities indiscriminately and targeted civilians opportunistically rather than focusing on specific households.

The cumulative impact of violence has generated widespread fear, psychological distress, and uncertainty among displaced households.

Persons with specific needs

The assessment identified several groups requiring targeted follow-up, including:

- Older persons;
- Persons with disabilities;
- Female-headed households;
- People in need of medical assistance;
- Children at risk;
- Separated family members, including children.

Some older persons reportedly remained in the area of origin due to mobility constraints associated with the long journey to displacement locations.

Risks of exploitation and for social cohesion

Most displaced households are being hosted by relatives or community members. While hosting arrangements initially provided an important coping mechanism, increasing pressure on household resources has reportedly contributed to overcrowding and social tensions, among displaced persons.

Several households reported moving between host families due to discomfort or strained relationships. In addition, women reported pressure to contribute financially despite lacking income, as well as expectations to perform domestic labour or water collection in exchange for accommodation and access to food. Many respondents expressed interest in receiving shelter materials that would allow them to establish temporary structures and reduce pressure on hosts.

Children were reportedly subjected to bullying and discrimination within some host households, contributing to feelings of exclusion and marginalization. The combination of poverty, dependency, and overcrowded living conditions may increase risks of exploitation and other forms of abuse and harmful coping mechanisms if assistance is not provided.

Community discussion with newly displaced households from Nabaje during the rapid protection assessment in Ntende, Mocímboa da Praia District, May 2026. © UNHCR

Risks of harmful coping mechanisms

Food insecurity emerged as one of the most urgent concerns raised during discussions. Displaced households currently rely almost entirely on host families for food and other basic needs. Some respondents reported selling personal belongings, including mobile phones and household assets, to purchase food. These coping strategies were widely considered unsustainable.

Prior to displacement, most households depended on fishing activities for income. At the time of assessment, newly arrived households had not resumed fishing or established alternative livelihood opportunities. Women expressed particular interest in small-scale income-generating activities to improve self-reliance and reduce dependency.

Access to services and documentation

Respondents generally reported physical access to health facilities; however, financial barriers significantly limited access to treatment and medicines. Several displaced individuals indicated that they had gone to seek healthcare in Mocímboa da Praia town following the attacks but were unable to purchase prescribed medication.

Loss and destruction of civil documentation were also reported. Some households fled without their documents, while others stated that documents were destroyed during attacks. Lack of documentation may hinder access to services, assistance, and future recovery efforts.

For more information

Contact: UNHCR Mozambique Protection Unit (mozmaprotection@unhcr.org)
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4. Intentions

The vast majority of respondents expressed a desire to return to their places of origin once security conditions permit. However, all interviewees indicated that under the current security situation, they would not (yet) feel safe to return.

Several households noted that, if humanitarian assistance and livelihood opportunities are not available in displacement locations, some families may eventually consider returning despite ongoing protection risks.

5. Priority Protection Needs

In order to prevent, mitigate or address the above protection risks, the following protection priority needs were consistently identified (in no order of relevance) during the rapid protection assessment:

- Protection monitoring and case management, including but not only GBV response
- Civil documentation support, particularly re-issuance of documents lost or destroyed
- Assistance for persons with specific needs, particularly family reunification and specialized services
- Child protection services, particularly PSS and support for separated children
- Psychosocial support, particularly addressing those witnessing or victims of violence and those under imminent threat
- Livelihood and income-generating support in areas of displacement due to loss of productive assets and lack of access to their farm
- Support with material assistance in order to prevent resorting to harmful copying mechanisms

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