UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

PROTECTION RISK SEVERITY

5 | High **High protection risk**

Protection risks are acute and critical. Civilian-targeting incidents are widespread, displacement is large-scale, and humanitarian access is heavily constrained. Immediate and robust protection responses are required.

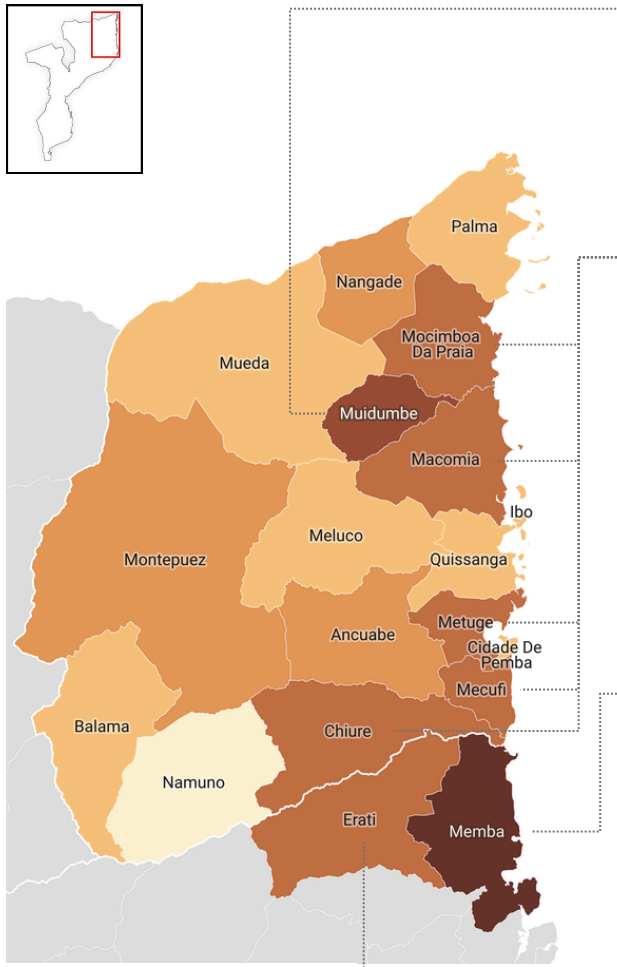
November recorded the highest levels of civilian harm recorded in 2025. While the overall number of violent incidents in Cabo Delgado remained broadly consistent with October, non-state armed group (NSAG) expansion into Memba and Erati districts in Nampula triggered a sharp escalation in violence and displacement after 10 November. At the same time, NSAG activity continued to concentrate in Macomia, Mocímboa da Praia and Muidumbe districts of Cabo Delgado.

Civilian-targeting incidents reached unprecedented levels, with 40 incidents and 67 fatalities recorded during the month. Although direct attacks against civilians declined toward the end of November, NSAG elements sustained intimidation and disruption of livelihoods through large-scale abductions, particularly in Metuge, Mocímboa da Praia and Muidumbe.

Escalating insecurity drove the highest displacement levels seen in the past 12 months. An estimated 112,000 people were newly displaced in November, with approximately 96 per cent originating from Memba and Erati and fleeing to neighboring districts.

KEY FIGURES | NOVEMBER 2025

- **223 protection incidents** were reported, a 41% increase in reporting compared to October. (Source: UNHCR)
- **85% of violent events targeted civilians** and resulted in 67 civilian deaths in a single month, the highest record in 2025. (Source: ACLED)
- **Approximately 112,000 people fled** in November alone, the highest monthly displacement in the past 12 months. (Source: IOM/DTM)
- **8 districts with access challenges** (Source: OCHA)



Map data: © OCHA • Created with Datawrapper

Legend

Low protection risk ⟷ Severe protection risk

1 Minimal	2 Elevated	3 Significant	4 Substantial	5 High	6 Extreme

5 | High

Muidumbe (Escalated from Substantial last month)

- Violence escalated sharply, with civilian fatalities tripling, including the abduction of around 30 children in Namacande (8 November), one of the largest single child-abduction incidents reported.
- Approximately 3,600 people fled in November, the highest level recorded in the district since 2023.

4 | Substantial

- **Mocímboa da Praia:** Abduction of 10+ civilians across neighborhoods and islands.
- **Macomia:** Eight civilian-targeting incidents in one week (8-14 November), including killings and abductions.
- **Metuge:** Abduction of 12+ civilians and beheading of three people.
- **Mecufi**: Around 14,000 arrivals in two weeks, largely originating from Memba and Chiúre. The highest arrivals record in the district since 2023, placing severe strain on already limited services.
- **Chiúre**: Violence disrupted food distribution in Napala; gunfire used to disperse crowds, causing injuries to community members (1 November).

6 | Extreme

Memba (Escalated from Significant last month)

- Escalated NSAG attacks, including killing 24+ civilians, burning 100+ houses and looting shops and agricultural areas.
- Around 90,000 displaced to neighboring districts by the end of month. Frequent bidirectional movements as people seek food, recover belongings or assess security conditions in the place of origin.

4 | Substantial

Erati (Escalated from Elevated last month)

- Hosting 100,000+ displaced people by the end of month, mainly displaced from Memba.
- Overcrowded sites, limited basic services, rising cases of watery diarrhea and malnutrition.

Methodology: The Protection Risk Severity Thermometer is a warning tool to signal deteriorating security and protection conditions at district and provincial level. It aggregates multiple indicators into a composite score to inform situational awareness, guide humanitarian prioritisation and flag emerging "hot spots" for preventive and proactive action. The thermometer rests on three pillars: (1) Security, the signal pillar, capturing signs of protection risk, (2) Displacement, reflecting outcomes of security risks and (3) Humanitarian access, capturing whether areas are hard to reach, recognising that limited access worsens risks. Data are sourced from ACLED, IOM/DTM and OCHA and each indicator is normalised and combined using weights. To ensure the index reflects both trends and immediacy, severity is calculated on the basis of the past three months of data, applying higher weight to the most recent month. The composite score is translated into a colour scale from light yellow to brown.

PROTECTION MONITORING FINDINGS

This Protection Monitoring report is based on data collected by UNHCR's network of trained community protection activists, managed by partners AVSI, CUAMM, GCR and Helpcode.

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHY

6,977
INDIVIDUALS REPRESENTED
by 1,430 respondents (households)

103
KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS
for qualitative data

17
DISTRICTS IN CABO DELGADO

Gender

44% MEN

56% WOMEN

Age group

82% YOUNGER PEOPLE (18-59 years old)

18% OLDER PEOPLE (60+ years old)

Population group

82% DISPLACED PEOPLE

18% RETURNEES to their place of origin

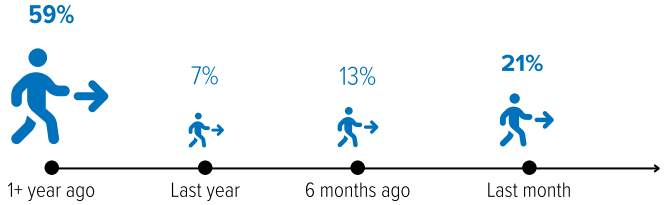
Location (Displaced people)

74% SITES

26% HOST COMMUNITIES

DISPLACEMENT TIMEFRAMES

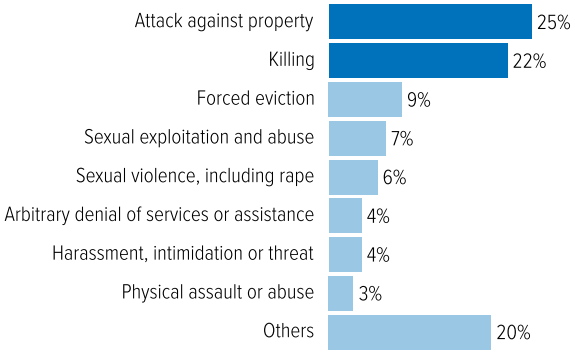
When did you arrive here?



- Among the 21% of those who arrived in the last month, most (63%) are in Mueda district, while the remaining 37% are spread across other districts.
- Main reasons for flight include village attacks (89%) and fear of village being attacked (11%). Most displaced within the last month are from Mocímboa da Praia, Muidumbe and Chiúre.

PROTECTION INCIDENTS

Type of protection incidents



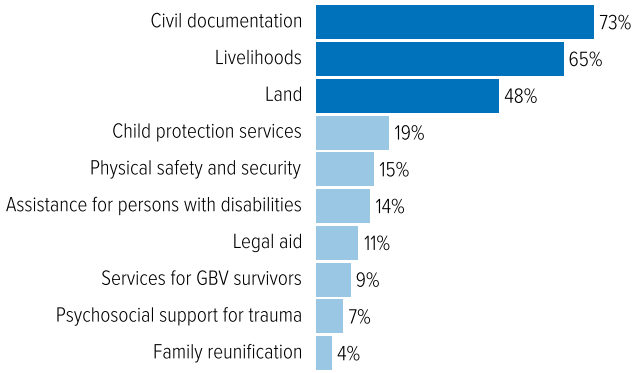
- In November, 13% of respondents reported having experienced or witnessed **228 protection incidents**, representing a 41% increase in reporting compared to October.
- The most prominent protection incidents among adults were killing and attack against property, while the most prominent among children were sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual violence, including rape. In households where both adults and children were affected by incidents, the most frequently reported were forced eviction from house/land and killing.
- Women suffered more protection incidents, including killing, forced eviction from house/land and attack against property, than men.
- Most incidents (48%) occurred when villages were attacked, followed by in displacement sites (27%) and during flight (21%). Displacement sites show high levels of attack against property (Ancuabe, Macomia and Mueda) and forced eviction from house/land (Pemba). After fleeing, attack against property and sexual exploitation were notable in Mocímboa da Praia and Nangade.

Type of incidents by phase and rank

Phases	First	Second	Third
When village was attacked	Killing	Attack against property	Forced eviction from house/land
During flight, on the way to the displacement area	Attack against property	Sexual exploitation and abuse	Arbitrary detention
In the place of displacement	Attack against property	Forced eviction from house/land	Arbitrary denial of services or assistance
In the area of origin after having returned	Attack against property	Sexual exploitation and abuse	Sexual violence, including rape

PROTECTION NEEDS

Type of protection needs



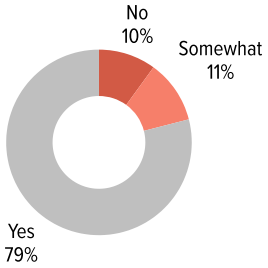
% of respondents (multiple responses allowed)

- **Civil documentation** is the most critical protection need across districts and amongst all age group. This need was also highest among those displaced within the last month (78%). Civil documentation is often left behind or destroyed when people flee and they face significant barriers in replacing it, including costs, long distances to civil registries and lack of clear information on procedure.
- The need for **livelihoods**[1] is also widely reported, particularly prominently in Balama (100%), Namuno (83%) and Palma (75%). People displaced within the last month also reported access to livelihoods as the second highest need (60%).
- The need for **land** shows significant variation, peaking in Chiúre (67%) and Mueda (73%), but extremely low in Balama and Ibo. Access to land proved most challenging for older people.
- **Child protection** concerns are highest in Namuno (75%).
- **Physical safety** needs are elevated in Metuge (43%) and Meluco (37%).
- **Psychosocial support** needs are notable in Namuno (33%) and Metuge (18%), and most acute among young people.
- Across protection need categories, households with a person with a disability reported slightly higher protection needs than households without. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) corroborated the overall top two protection needs, citing a critical need for civil documentation and livelihoods.

[1] Livelihoods is critical in preventing and mitigating protection risks, keeping people from engaging in harmful coping mechanisms, and therefore is included among the list of protection needs.

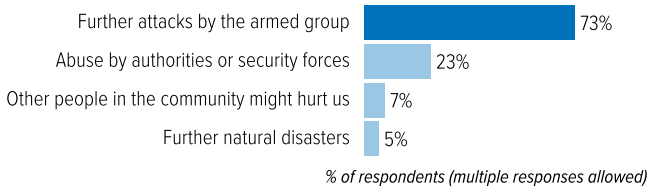
PERCEPTION OF SAFETY

Do you feel safe here?



- Around 21% of total respondents (and 34% amongst the new arrivals) do not feel fully safe.
- Safety varies widely across districts. Balama, Namuno and Muidumbe report high feelings of safety, while Ibo and Mocímboa da Praia stand out, with more than 70% feeling unsafe. One third of respondents in Meluco, Montepuez, Macomia, Palma and Pemba feel unsafe.
- Among those displaced within the last month, lower feelings of safety (not safe/somewhat safe) were reported in Meluco (100%), Montepuez (79%), Pemba (58%) and Muidumbe (37%).
- IDPs report considerably higher feelings of safety than returnees, with 83% of IDPs saying they feel safe compared to only 56% of returnees.

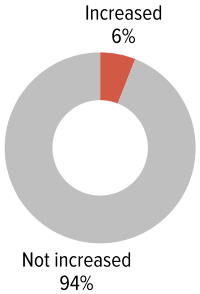
Reasons for not feeling safe



- Most of those feeling unsafe fear further attacks by armed groups. However, women are significantly more fearful of further attacks (77%) than men (67%), as are households with a person with a disability (75%) than those without (65%).
- KIIs further revealed that perceptions of insecurity are driven by insurgent activity, night crime, kidnappings, threats, discrimination and gaps in assistance/services. Rumors and misinformation often amplify fears and displacement trauma.

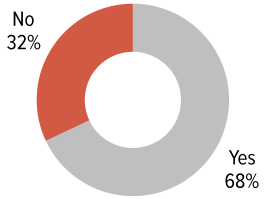
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

Violence and abuse against women in your community in the last 30 days



- While most respondents overall did not observe an increase in violence against women in the past 30 days, notable increases were reported in Pemba and Montepuez (14% each) and Nangade (12%).
- KIIs with women and girls revealed they feel unsafe mainly due to GBV (including sexual violence), kidnappings and lack of protection services. This increased fear can be partially explained by the NSAGs' systematic targeting of women and girls for sexual violence and servitude.
- Economic vulnerability, unemployment and lack of justice amplify risks.

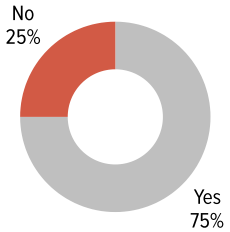
Are these women able to access services for survivors of GBV?



- 32% of respondents said GBV survivors are not able to access medical, mental health or legal support. Younger women aged 18-24 report the lowest access, with only 54% of these able to reach these services.

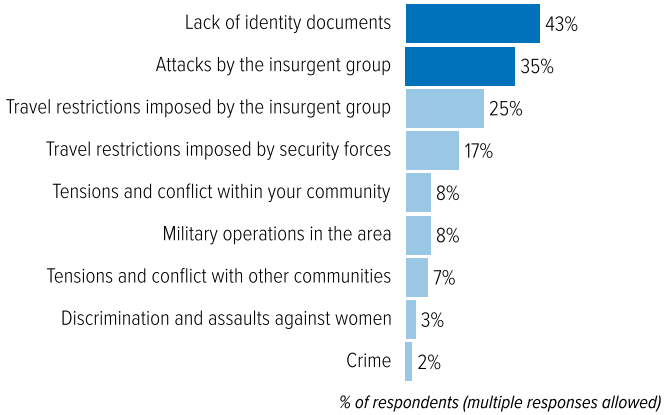
FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Can you and your family move freely wherever you want within or outside of your community?



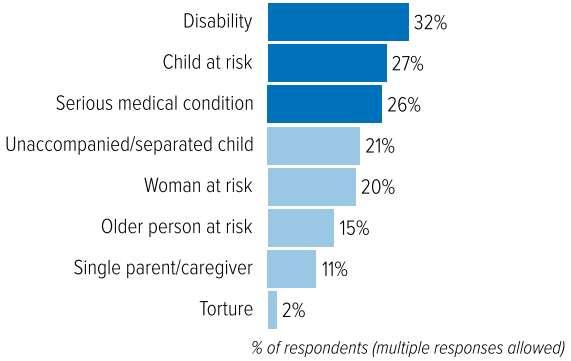
- IDPs report significantly less restrictions on freedom of movement (22%) compared to returnees (39%).
- Lack of documentation (especially in Ibo, Meluco and Mueda) and attacks by NSAGs (especially in Meluco and Quissanga) are the top reported reasons for a quarter of respondents facing movement restrictions.
- Other reasons include curfews, social tensions and the rainy season.

Reasons for restrictions on freedom of movement



PERSONS WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS

Persons with specific needs

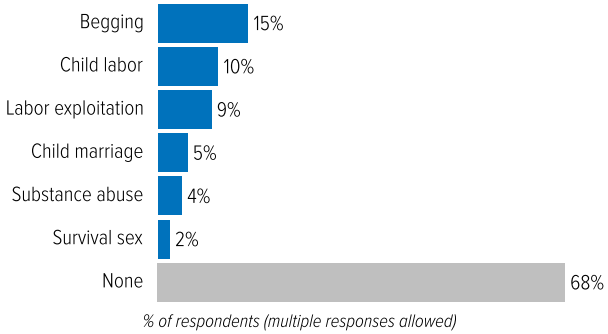


- 76% of respondents reported having one or more household members with a specific need, the most prevalent being disability (30%).
- **Disability** is particularly prominent in Ibo (45%) and Mecufi (41%), and is most prevalent among persons aged 60+ (40%).
- **Physical disabilities** are the most common, followed by visual, hearing, speech and mental disabilities.
- **Child protection** risks are most prevalent in Mocímboa da Praia (55%) and Metuge (41%) with alarming levels of unaccompanied children observed in several districts, particularly in Muidumbe (49%), where nearly half of respondents reported the presence of an unaccompanied child.
- **Serious medical conditions** are mostly reported in Muidumbe (45%) and Chiúre (39%).
- **Women** and **older persons at risk** are reported across all districts, while **single parent** households are most prominent in Nangade (35%). These specific needs are particularly reported amongst adults ages 25-59.

People displaced within last month: Child-related vulnerabilities are the most prevalent. Nearly half (46%) reported the presence of a child at risk, while 31% reported unaccompanied or separated children. Disability (30%) and serious medical conditions (27%) are also frequently reported. Protection risks affecting women are reported by 16% of respondents, while older person at risk account for 8%.

HARMFUL COPING MECHANISMS

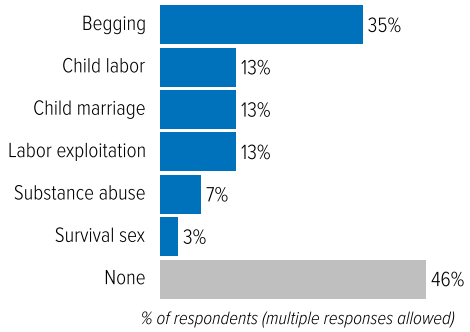
Harmful coping mechanisms



- Over 32% of respondents report being forced to engage in harmful coping mechanisms to survive, including in order to be able to have enough food, a roof over their heads, and meet other basic necessities, as displacement has limited their mobility, their capacity to access livelihood and the community support mechanisms that existed. Among those displaced within the last month, this proportion was significantly higher, **with 54% of newly displaced people forced to engage in harmful coping mechanisms.**
- Younger (18-24 years old) and older (60+ years old) report slightly higher engagement in harmful coping mechanisms compared to those aged 25-59 years old. **Begging** is most common among people aged 60+ (18%) and 18-24 (17%). Labor exploitation affects 13% of older respondents, more than other age groups. Substance abuse remains low across all groups, while survival sex is reported only among younger respondents (3%) and adults (2%), while noting this harmful coping mechanism is perpetually underreported due to taboo, shame and fear of retaliation.
- Returnees report higher harmful coping mechanisms compared to IDPs. **Child labor** is nearly twice as common among returnees (17%) than IDPs (9%), while **labor exploitation** also affects returnees more heavily (14% vs. 8%). 10% of returnees reported substance abuse compared to only 3% of IDPs. Survival sex is reported five times more often among returnees (5%) than IDPs (1%), recognizing both are likely underreporting. Rates of begging (15-16%) and child marriage (5-6%) are similar across both groups.

People displaced within last month

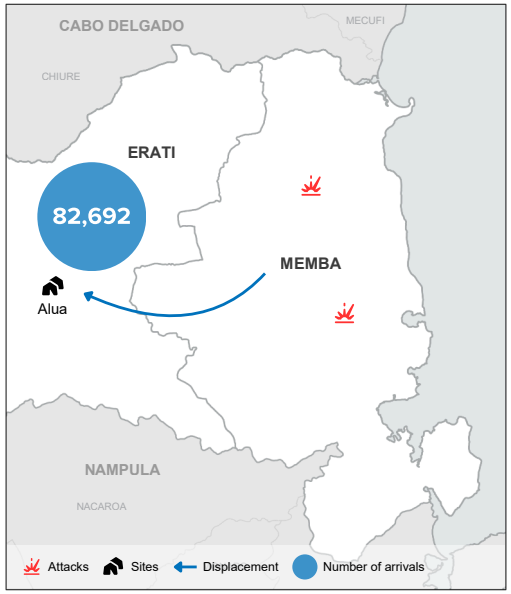
Harmful coping mechanisms



ZOOM IN: ERATI (NAMPULA)

OVERALL SITUATION

In November 2025, the humanitarian situation in Erati District deteriorated rapidly. Following attacks by Non-State Armed groups (NSGAs) in Memba District from 10 November, Erati began receiving daily arrivals of displaced persons from several villages, including Chipene, Mazua, Nivale, Odinepa and Mecutane. By the end of November, estimates suggested that Erati was hosting over 100,000 displaced individuals, with about 80% being recorded by Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) predominantly in Alua-sede (64%), Alua-velha (17%) and Miliva (19%), totaling 16,137 IDP households including 82,692 individuals. In addition, significant numbers of unregistered IDP families were also hosted in Namapa-sede as well as in other districts in Nampula Province such as Nacaroa, Nacala and the capital-district of Nampula, in addition to Mecufi and Chiure districts in Cabo Delgado Province.



Source: OCHA, IOM/DTM, INGD

In Alua and Miliva, many households had to rent houses with dozens of other displaced or spontaneously settle at the entrance of shops or host families' verandas and yards. Many were sheltered in tents and informal sites, including schools that were vacant during the holiday season. These sites were overcrowded and lacked adequate WASH facilities.

Limited assistance in displacement areas placed increased strain on host communities, whose initial generosity was challenged by prolonged pressure on already scarce resources. Outbreaks of measles, scabies and chickenpox were reported across the three main displacement locations, and there were concerns about a cholera outbreak. Cases of watery diarrhea and malnutrition among all age groups were frequently identified and referred to health services, where response capacity remained extremely limited. Overall, service delivery in Erati, particularly in food security, WASH, shelter and health, was far below what was required to meet the scale of needs.

PROTECTION RISKS

1. **Gender-based violence** concerns were rising, with frequent reports of domestic violence, and physical and psychological abuse.
2. The increasing number of **early marriage** and **child pregnancy** cases identified among new arrivals also indicated the heightened burden shouldered by girls and young females in areas of origin, highlighting the need to prevent further harmful coping mechanisms during displacement.
3. Many individuals were deeply **traumatized** by the experienced attacks, particularly those who have witnessed family members being killed or abducted, homes burned, or enduring separation from loved ones.
4. At the protection desk, the main concern remained **family separation**, as many families lost contact with relatives while fleeing or were forced to leave loved ones behind; having remained unaware of their whereabouts and how to reunite with them.
5. **Older persons and persons with disabilities** faced heightened protection risks, including limited mobility and barriers to accessing services, which increased their vulnerability to neglect, abuse and exploitation. While many were able to flee with the support of neighbors or family members, they reported significant difficulties in accessing food, water or assistance and were at greater risk of isolation.
6. **Tensions between host communities and displaced populations** continued to increase. In addition, cases of verbal abuse and threats against IDPs by host community members were reported, including restrictions on access to housing and water points, and, in some instances, expulsion from host households and verandas despite the heavy rains.
7. For IDPs residing within host communities, the risk of **exploitation** remained high, as economic hardship and insecure living arrangements contributed to harmful coping mechanisms, including being required to work in farms as a condition to remain hosted.

Displaced persons in Alua sede transit centre, Erati © UNHCR/ Deiliany Souza

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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