



## The ISCAP in the Shadow of the Russian-Ukrainian War<sup>1</sup>

Tibor Pintér<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract:

The outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022 has focused the world's attention on Eastern Europe. But we should not overlook the impact it had on global economy, with inflation and rising material prices. If we focus on Africa, and East Africa in particular, we cannot overlook the security risks posed by jihadism, which runs parallel to the conflict between Russia and the Ukraine. The Islamic State's affiliates are dominant not only in the West but also in the East of Africa. In 2019, it incorporated two of its local affiliates into the then-established ISCAP (Islamic State Central Africa Province). Prior to that, the two organisations were significantly different, given the local context, the date of their formation and their trajectories. In order to analyse the prospects of ISCAP for the period 2022-2023, it is necessary to have a historical background of the organisation and to develop a framework that can categorise the development path of jihadist organisations. The objectives of the study include whether the global problems caused by the war have an impact on the life of ISCAP or the counterinsurgency against them, and the changing position of the Russians in East Africa.

### Keywords:

ADF, ASWJ, DRC, ISCAP, jihadism

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<sup>2</sup> PhD Student in the Doctoral School of Faculty of Law at University of Szeged, Szeged; PhD member of the International and Regional Studies Institute of the University of Szeged, Szeged; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9689-2191>; teibor93@gmail.com

## **Introduction**

In late February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine, a conflict that is still ongoing at the time of writing. It is essentially a regional conflict, yet it has a global impact. From Africa's point of view, two important elements of these impacts are highlighted. The first is the fact that the two warring parties are among the world's largest exporters of cereals and in 2020 African states imported 44% of their wheat from Africa. This is compounded by the fact that most sub-Saharan African countries do not have sufficient reserves to make these fragile economies resilient to such sudden crises (Marsai and Tóth, 2022, pp. 4-7).

The other is the price explosion that we have seen internationally, which started with the rise in energy and grain prices. This has caused severe inflation, affecting all aspects of life and making it more expensive to achieve a general standard of living (Abu Hatab, 2022, pp. 41-42). This illustrates the vulnerability of African states to a crisis that could influence global economic trends. This may generate a security crisis that might benefit the violent organisations, as states can respond to an emerging global economic crisis by reallocating resources, thus preventing a potential food crisis.

Within violent organisations, jihadist organisations may find it an ideal arena to increase their influence if the instability they cause is able to spread to a larger and larger area, which can manifest itself in disrupting calm local agricultural production or triggering a wave of refugees.

## **Methodology**

In this paper, I will focus on the following three questions:

-Is the ISCAP a single organisation or merely an artificial entity?

-Is ISCAP's members' developmental trajectory a short-term indicator of their future career path?

-Does the war outlined in the introduction or the global problems it has caused have an impact on the counterinsurgency against ISCAP?

In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to have a common description of the organisations involved in ISCAP in a single framework. To do this, I have drawn on the classification system found in the book *Horn, Sahel, and Rift: Fault-lines of the*



African Jihad by Stig Jarle Hansen, in which he empirically constructs a framework based on ten East African jihadist organisations. However, for a more accurate description, an analysis pattern is needed, for which the *SWOT* analysis is helpful. Mostly used in business and marketing, it can also contribute to other disciplines, in this case security policy, as a kind of risk analysis.

This combined framework is described in the next chapter. The history of the parts of ISCAP is indispensable, but the distinction between the stages is based on the categories established in the *SWOT* analysis. The unity of ISCAP will be discussed, followed by the conclusions answering the question posed. Throughout the paper, I will draw on secondary sources, i.e. studies, reports and the latest news.

### ***Typology of Territorial Presence with SWOT Analysis***

The concept of Stig Jarle Hansen's description of the categories in a *SWOT* analysis makes the categories easier to understand, highlighting their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. In the table below, each category has been assigned two characteristics, which are either the most important and/or the most comprehensive terms, in an attempt to provide a consistent presentation of the characteristics of the organisations.

As Stig Jarle Hansen points out, these organisations are constantly moving along a development trajectory whose future is difficult to determine, since this trajectory can be affected by an internal structural crisis, a major battlefield victory or, conversely, a major defeat. For this reason, it is possible that a jihadist organisation may have been in more than one category at some stage of its development during its lifetime.

In the 'Strengths' category, the characteristics that make the organisation the most dangerous from a security point of view, that are difficult to eliminate or inhibit and that are the key to the organisation's success are included. 'Weaknesses' include those characteristics that are the Achilles heel that the organisation lives with and tries to adapt to. Basically, the weaknesses show the operational limits of these organisations and the obstacles that prevent them from developing at a higher pace.

The 'Opportunities' show the factors that can make the organisation even greater, which if they can realise, can take them to a higher level, which at that moment in time shows them the most profitable option. And 'Threats' shows the characteristics that could cause a drastic decline in the group if they occur, which in the most extreme case could bring them to the edge of extinction. This is an important category for counterinsurgency organisations, as the occurrence of these events can really destabilise jihadist organisations in this category.

Categories	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Clandestine network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The mystery of the structure</li> <li>- Assassinations are the main weapon, The group consists of secret cellular units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A well-functioning state structure is the enemy</li> <li>- Lack of a large training base;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Money flows through secret networks</li> <li>- Integrating new members into the group's closed system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Occurrence of ideological fragmentation</li> <li>- High risk of desertion</li> </ul>
Accepted presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supported by the state</li> <li>- Significant training capacity and open flow of information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Subordination to the interests of the state</li> <li>- Limited powers due to a strong state apparatus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Significant source of income</li> <li>- Can be openly strengthened in its own field</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Defying the interests of the state</li> <li>- Organisation's overreach is seen as a threat by the state</li> </ul>
Semi-territorial presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effective use of guerrilla strategy</li> <li>- Hit and run tactics are the most powerful weapon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rural population can influence the functioning of the organisation</li> <li>- Defence against comprehensive operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Making rural areas spheres of influence</li> <li>- Exploitation of rural areas and the illegal economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Blocking foreign money traps</li> <li>- Drastic decline in local support</li> </ul>
Territorial control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Own territory</li> <li>- Exploiting the state within a state system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- State within the state structure involves significant expenditure</li> <li>- Fixed location makes the organisation vulnerable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training young foreigners and spreading the ideology</li> <li>- Building good relations with local people and gaining their support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The group is forced into a conventional war to defend its territory</li> <li>- Suffering loss of prestige</li> </ul>

*Table 1: Typology of territorial presence with SWOT analysis - self-edited table (Hansen, 2019a, pp. 18-34)*

## Circumstances of the Creation of ISCAP

Islamic State Provinces and Rival al Qaeda Affiliates' Areas of Operations in Africa, March 2017 to May 2020

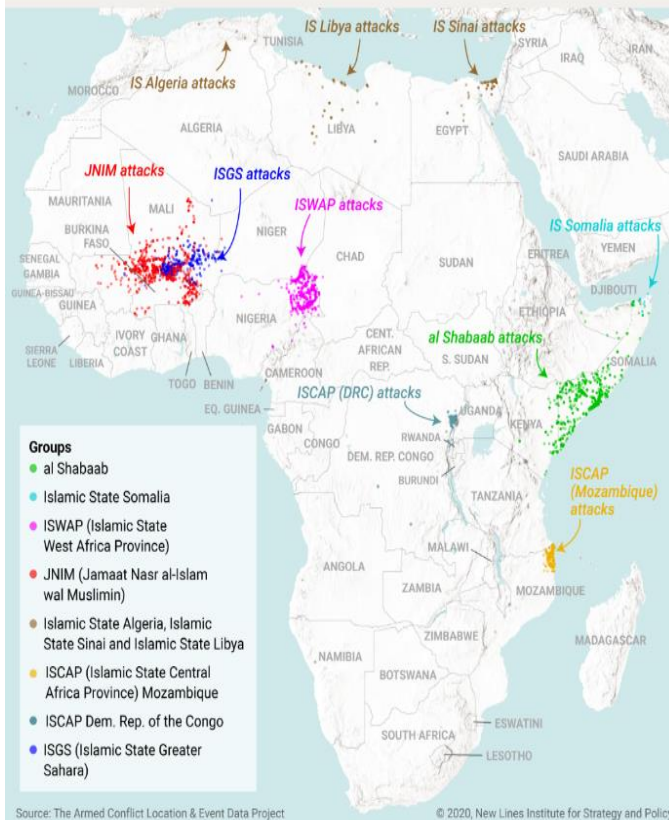


Table 2: Jihadist organizations in Africa between 2017-2020 (Zenn, 2020)

Until 2019, while the Islamic State was in a position of territorial presence, its own territories were the focus. From 2017 onwards, the organisation's territories began to shrink drastically, until 2019, when the last base was lost. This was the moment when the organisation started to become a global jihadist umbrella organisation and focused on its transnational links (BBC, 2019). Although there were those who predicted the end of ISIS, it merely reorganised internally and adapted to the semi-territorial category. From a global perspective, one of the most important steps in this

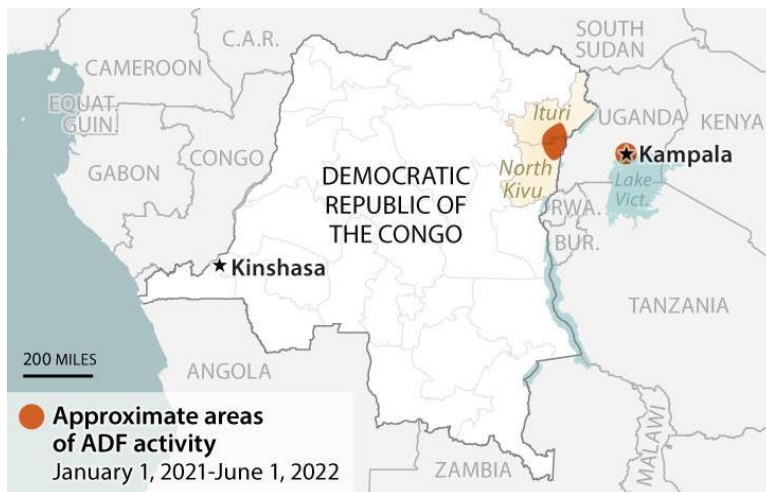
process has been the reorganisation and consolidation of existing provinces, granting status where appropriate to areas that had not previously been granted it (East Asia). Through this reorganisation, it has halved the number of its provinces, organising these entities into larger units (Candland et al., 2021, pp. 8-9).

However, there are strict conditions and requirements for being accepted by the Islamic State as a single entity. First and foremost, the leader of the organisation intending to join must swear an oath of allegiance to the caliph of ISIS and this must be accepted by the caliph. In addition, the applicant organisation must apply the ISIS dogma, which includes its ideology and jurisprudence, and its methodology, which is the coordination of political and military strategy. In the case of the dogma, it is important to highlight its relationship with the takfir, which is the issue of proscription or Muslim apostasy, which justifies massacres against civilians, including Muslims. And, in addition, maintaining relations between the two sides is an important requirement, meaning that the closest and quickest possible exchange of information is increasingly important in the age of social media, where ISIS places great emphasis on propaganda videos (Candland et al., 2021, pp. 7-8).

Of the two ISCAP organisations, only the ADF's pledge of allegiance can be dated precisely. In 2017, a low-quality video was made declaring allegiance to the Islamic

State, but the caliph's response was not forthcoming (Hansen, 2019b). The first reference to the adoption of the loyalty oath is the first evidence of the former caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's reference to the creation of a Central African province in a 2018 video (Callimachi, 2019). ISIS headquarters recognised the new province as ISCAP in April 2019. Interestingly, the ADF was then part of the province, the ASWJ was only recognised in June 2019 (Lister, 2020, p. 39). This alone shows that there are two independent jihadist movements that have come under the umbrella of ISIS. To understand and prove this, the next two chapters will first briefly discuss the history of the ADF and then the ASWJ.

### **ADF (Allied Democratic Forces)**



*Table 3: Approximate areas of ADF activity between 2021-2022 (Arieff, 2022)*

Until its creation in 1995, the ADF(-NALU) was the result of the fusion by external power of groups based on ethnic and religious fragmentation. The National Army for the Liberation of Uganda - NALU

is a radical movement of oppressed ethnic groups living along the Congo-Uganda border that sought to improve their deteriorating condition in the 1980s. After Yoweri Museveni came to power in 1986, the Ugandan government structurally oppressed and marginalised the people living there, increasingly excluding them from Ugandan politics (Scorgie, 2011, p. 8). The NALU wanted first and foremost local autonomy, initially through propaganda and later through increasingly violent means. The reason for this is that the NALU, taking advantage of its links with the Congolese border region, enjoyed the support of the DRC leader Mobutu, whose aim was to overthrow the Ugandan regime. Museveni was forced into action and tried to stop the NALU. The culmination was in 1992, when the NALU launched an attack in western Uganda, but was defeated by the Ugandan army and moved into neighbouring DRC, taking advantage of its cross-border connections to integrate into local society (Titeca and Vlassenroot, 2012, pp. 157-158).

At the same time, President Museveni faced a depoliticised Muslim divide, exacerbated by the emergence of the Tabliq movement, whose leaders were Saudi schooled Ugandan clerics who favoured a more puritan form of Islam, challenging traditional Ugandan Muslim scholars. In 1991, some members of the movement stormed





the Kampala mosque, killing several police officers. At the lead of this attack was a young radical thinker, Jamil Mukulu, who was arrested and imprisoned with his companions until their release in 1994. Mukulu then founded the Movement of Ugandan Combatants for Freedom – UMFF with Sudanese support, but its existence proved short-lived as the Ugandan army moved into their camp in 1995, forcing them out of Uganda and into the eastern borderlands of the DRC (Congo Research Group, 2018, p. 5). The remnants of the UMFF reorganised in the DRC under the name ADF, which in June 1995 formed an alliance with another exiled movement, the NALU (Titeca, 2016, p. 1192).

Since 1995, the ADF(-NALU) has undergone a rollercoaster development. Initially, the NALU component was dominant through local contacts and ties in the Congolese border region. The development trajectory has been steep, mainly thanks to support from Sudan and the DRC. Sudan provided military training, while the DRC gave it growing space, arming them by entrusting the organisation with security tasks. As they were partners of the Congolese government, they began an open recruitment campaign, which was effective (Hansen, 2019a, pp. 131-132). At that time, the organisation was in a status of accepted presence. It is estimated that in 1996 the ADF(-NALU) numbered between 4,000 and 5,000 fighters, becoming strong enough to carry out cross-border attacks. This was clearly a high point in the organisation's history. In 1996, it began to carry out attacks in Uganda. In 1998, it raided a school for forced recruitment and in 1999, it besieged a Ugandan prison. In 1999, eight attacks were carried out in Kampala. By the late 1990s, the ADF(-NALU) support base had dried up: Mobutu was overthrown and replaced by Kabila, who pursued a Uganda-friendly policy, while Sudanese support also gradually declined and then disappeared. The turning point came with the launch of Operation Mountain Sweep in November 1999, when Ugandan forces crossed into the Congolese border region to eliminate the ADF(-NALU). It was so effective that the organisation was on the verge of disappearing, but it survived, with only a few hundred fighters in the early 2000s. The NALU component slowly disappeared within the ADF(-NALU), as many took up the offer of amnesty made by Museveni. Around 2007-2008, the ADF clearly became the overwhelming dominant force within the organisation, and this is where the ADF-NALU effectively ceased to exist (International Crisis Group, 2012, pp. 4-6). By this time the ADF was clearly in a semi-territorial presence and continues to hold this status to this day.

From this point onwards, the ADF was on an upward trajectory, its internal structure was strengthened, as by then the leader was undoubtedly Jamil Mukulu. They began to enter into economic symbiosis with local communities in the eastern region of the DRC, generating income. The internal structure became ideologically based on the Islamic religion and the organisation learned to adapt easily to the local mountain terrain and to the threats of attacks by the Congolese army. By 2014, although the organisation had not reached the numbers of the mid-1990s, it still had a few hundred fighters (Hansen, 2019a, pp. 136-138). The most successful offensive by the Congolese

army, in partnership with United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo – MONUSCO, was Operation Sukola I, launched in 2014, when almost all ADF bases were captured, forcing ADF elements to flee and disperse. Jamil Mukulu fled and was arrested in Tanzania, then extradited to Uganda. Although the ADF did not reach the low point of the early 2000s, it suffered heavy losses and its internal structure was damaged. The new leader was Musa Baluku, under whose leadership the organisation became radicalised and violent attacks against civilians increased (United Nations Security Council, 2016, pp. 14-16).

Baluku made the ADF increasingly radical, which was coupled with a shift towards ISIS. This was not only an ideological decision on Baluku's part, but also a strategic one, hoping that the close association with the Islamic State would pay off both financially and in terms of combat assets. The organisation partially lifted its veil of secrecy and started producing videos on social media from 2016, where it preferred to call itself Madina a Tauheed Wau Mujahedeen – MTM, imitating major jihadist organisations. The ADF tried to use this for global Muslim recruitment, as it was no longer just Ugandan, but equally former Congolese. It was this kind of radical Muslim view that led to ISIS eventually taking it under its own umbrella in 2019, with ISIS undertakes more and more attacks as ISCAP activities (Candland, 2021, pp. 17-23).

The Congolese army has been trying to put continuous pressure on the ADF for the past decade or more, one of the two most important offensives being Operation Sokola I, launched in October 2019, during which the Congolese army captured several ADF camps, but their occupation was still not long-lived, which the ADF took advantage of and returned. The jihadists' response was an even more devastating attack on civilians to increase the bad blood between the Congolese army and the local population. Basically, the structure within the ADF has not changed, as it did after Operation Sukola I in 2014 (United Nations Security Council, 2020, pp. 10-12). The second is the most recent Operation Shujaa, which is interesting because it is a coalition offensive, launched jointly by the Congolese and Ugandan forces at the end of 2021, when around 4,000 Ugandan troops were deployed. This was a kind of manhunt for violent organisations, including the ADF. The full details of the operation are not yet known, so the extent of the successes achieved can only be estimated, but it is clear that the ADF command structure has remained unchanged and organised (Katusiime, 2022). Indeed, the operations appear to have made the ADF structure even more sporadic, spreading from Beni province to neighbouring Ituri province (United Nations Security Council, 2023, p. 4). But even more worrying is the April 2023 attack on a school in western Uganda by the ADF. Nearly 40 students were killed, but it was the first time since 1998 that the ADF had been able to attack a school in Uganda and at its peak. This is clearly a means of pressure and retaliation for Uganda attacking ADF positions with the DRC (Atuhaire and Gregory, 2023).



## ASWJ (Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah)

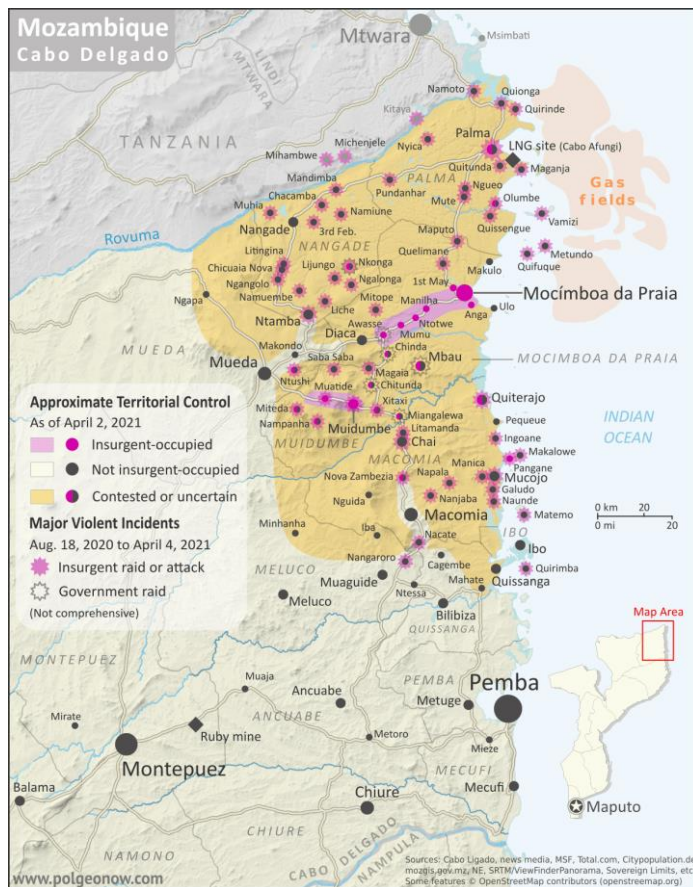


Table 4: ASWJ area of influence 2020-2021

The organisation is much younger than the ADF, yet the ethnic and religious fault lines along which it was formed can be traced back to the Portuguese colonial period. Cabo Delgado is the northeastern province of Mozambique, whose coastline is the epicentre of the emergence of the jihadist movement. The Frelimo movement of the Makonde ethnic group, which has been the ruling party since independence in 1975, played the leading role in the war of independence from 1964 to 1974. During the colonial period, the coastal Mwani ethnic group supported the Portuguese

colonialists in return for political concessions. After independence, the situation was reversed and the Makonde political and economic elite began to gain strength and the Mwani ethnic group began to be marginalised. This conflict was exacerbated by the civil war, in which Frelimo won against Renamo, which had a northern base. From then on, Cabo Delgado began to become increasingly impoverished as a result of the conscious actions of the Makonde political elite.

Basically, both ethnic groups are dominated by Islam in a country where Christianity is the state religion, but increasingly difficult living conditions have led Mwani Muslim youth to turn to religious radicalism as a way out of their increasingly difficult living conditions. In the last decade, this trend has been exacerbated by the discovery of mineral resources, including deep-sea natural gas in the coastal parishes and rubies in the southern part of Cabo Delgado. Although the locals could have benefited greatly from these discoveries, the Makonde political and economic elite have marginalised or driven the locals from their homes and granted concessions to foreign companies to extract the minerals, making it impossible for local small-scale miners to operate. These processes, combined with poor infrastructure and local administration, made Cabo Delgado an increasingly forgotten province until the mid-2010s (Mapfumo, 2020, pp. 102-105).

In recent decades, the Mozambican government has granted visas and foreign residency permits to Muslim missionary organisations in exchange for sending students from northern Mozambique on study trips abroad to countries such as Uganda, Kenya, Somalia and Saudi Arabia, and on their return they have increasingly begun to question the religious practices and interpretations of the local Islamic communities in Mozambique. This can be traced back to the 2010s, when a group of Muslims entered mosques in Mocímboa da Praia with guns and shoes, showing that local Islamic practice was unacceptable to them and opposing the intertwining and coexistence of the state and Islamic institutions (Bekoe et al., 2020, pp. 4-5). By this time, a sect had clearly emerged, which sought to gather those with the same radical views, but a wave of arrests followed for their anti-state views, but from 2015 onwards they condemned the state with increasingly strong rhetoric, demanding governance based on Islamic law. After 2016, they withdrew from society because of their rejection of social order, living according to their own political order, which is when the Islamist sect became an armed jihadist movement (Lister, 2020, pp. 36-37). The mysterious nature of the group means that it is not known for sure who is leading the group, it is more likely to be a senior command staff including Abdul Faizal, Abdul Remane, Abdul Raim, Nuno Remane, Ibn Omar and Salimo Kijepel (Campbell, 2021). At the time, the organisation may have been in a state of a clandestine network, a structure that determined its later structure, about which very little is known.

The jihadist insurgency began on 5 October 2017, when 30 fighters stormed a police station in Mocímboa da Praia. The fighting lasted for more than a day, mainly for loot. This was later followed by continuous armed attacks in the area. By 2019, ASWJ attacks had become increasingly sophisticated, with the ability to launch simultaneous attacks and carry out ambush-style assassinations, by which time footage of successful raids had been fed into the ISIS propaganda machine. The government sought to respond to the escalation by deploying private military companies, such as the Wagner Group, but they withdrew after a few weeks in the autumn of 2019. In 2020, the ASWJ became increasingly organised, forming geographically distinct groups, and thus gained a larger sphere of influence in Cabo Delgado, attacking larger and larger towns. In the second half of 2020, they carried out a multi-stage raid on the town of Mocímboa da Praia, occupying the town for a few days, and in the autumn of 2020, crossing into Tanzania, they stormed security installations, looting military equipment, the latter also highlighted by ISIS in its media. The group was then at the height of its power, as it was able to besiege the centres of Cabo Delgado. The high point was on 24 March 2021, when it overran the city of Palma, looting weapons depots and damaging government buildings, forcing thousands to flee. Although by April 2021, government forces had retaken some key positions, the event marked a turning point internationally (International Crisis Group, 2021, pp. 10-16). At that time, the organisation had around 2000 fighters (Doctor, 2022, p. 12). As of 2017, the ASWJ is clearly categorised as a semi-territorial presence.

As the city of Palma is the gateway to the discovered deep-sea natural gas fields, Total has suspended its multi-billion euro extraction project, declaring vis maior because safety conditions do not allow the project to continue. As a result, Rwanda sent troops to the region in July 2021, and a month later had already recaptured the main rebel-held towns (McKenzie and Balkiz, 2022). This was joined a few weeks later by Southern African Development Community – SADC units, bringing the total number of troops in the region to around 3,000, handing a military defeat to the ASWJ. But this did not spell the end of the organisation, as its members dispersed and merged with civilians, waiting for another opportunity (International Crisis Group, 2022, pp. 2-3). By this time, the organisation's fighters numbered roughly between 200 and 400 (Doctor, 2022, p. 12). By 2023, the ASWJ was split into more agile units and primarily targeted economic targets. Through guerrilla warfare and hit and run tactics, it expanded its sphere of influence outside Cabo Delgado. It carried out attacks in the neighbouring provinces of Nampula and Niassa, as well as in southern Tanzania (Columbo, 2023, pp. 2-3). Currently, ASWJ has an interesting status as it combines the characteristics of a clandestine network and a semi-territorial presence, which is one of the reasons for its relatively rapid spread.

### ***To What Extent Can ISCAP Be Considered a Single Entity?***

From a geographical point of view, not at all, since the spheres of influence of the two organisations are far apart, with the ADF located on the eastern border of the DRC and the ASWJ in the north of Mozambique. That notwithstanding, it cannot be said that there is no link between the two parties, with some reports of Mozambican fighters appearing at ADF training camps. But no jointly coordinated operations have taken place up to the time of writing (Zenn, 2020).

On the other hand, the two organisations are on different development paths and face similar problems. On the one hand, the ADF is perhaps now the most organised and dangerous since 2014, as illustrated by the fact that they have again carried out attacks on Ugandan schools, as outlined earlier. Since its peak in 2021, the ASWJ has been in a period of transformation and rebuilding, trying to maintain its sphere of influence and even expand through a cellular bottom-up structure, the latter being exemplified by the expansion of its food supply into neighbouring areas. It is true that both organisations are beginning to spread into neighbouring provinces, but they are at different stages of strength. With the creation of ISCAP, coalition forces have been increasing in the regions, the ADF has Ugandan forces alongside the Congolese army, MONUSCO and Rwandan soldiers have also been deployed in the region, and I would add that this coalition is also focusing on fighting other violent organisations (ACLED, 2023). In the case of the ASWJ, in addition to the Mozambican forces, Rwandan and SADC troops are present, with significant international support (Nhamirre, 2023).

The question arises as to how far ISCAP can be considered a unified province from the point of view of the Islamic State. What is evidence of unified remote control is that the Islamic State of Somalia – ISS can act as a kind of communication transmission and distribution centre, a kind of coordination centre (International Crisis Group, 2021, pp. 23-24). Although there is no conclusive evidence of how closely the ISIS leadership is linked to the leadership of ISCAP organisations, it is clear that it may be a looser link. Regardless, in recent years the ADF has displayed characteristics of the Islamic State, such as the use of suicide bombings and the production of beheading videos (Kibasomba Man-Byemba, 2022, p. 85). Perhaps the main reason for this is that both the ADF and the ASWJ are essentially the end product of conflicts along local ethnic and religious fault lines, and although they have transcended national borders and are still considered a local security risk rather than a regional one, they are far from the global level, which would be very useful for ISIS propaganda. It seems that from an ISIS perspective, the ASWJ could be more valuable and have greater propaganda power, as in March 2022, ISIS designated the northern part of Mozambique as a new, separate province (Columbo, 2023, p. 4). I emphasize that there has been no further announcement or official mention of this, but it highlights that for ISIS, the ASWJ's activities may be more central, taking precedence over the ADF.

## Conclusion

Among the direct actors in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, the former should be highlighted. Although Russia is a major international player in African politics due to its outstanding debts and its Soviet past, it is increasingly marginalised from the East African region, and within it from the countries of the region under review or has not had significant political influence in the past. Its last bastion was Mozambique, where there are still very good relations between the Russian and Mozambican political elites, but since 2019 the Russian side has not been able to give this relationship any tangible substance or success. Both economically and always militarily, it has been squeezed out of the region in 2019, of which I can give two examples: the Anadarko company drilled test wells in the early 2010s, which discovered deep-sea gas fields, and then became the main investor until 2019, when Total Energies bought out the Russian company's stake (Flanders Investment and Trade, 2021, p. 3). Also in that year, the Wagner Group was hired for the first time by the Mozambican government to manage the ASWJ, but due to the losses suffered and alleged bad relations with the Mozambican forces, it was withdrawn after a few weeks. The most recent attempt was the second Russia-Africa summit, held in St Petersburg on 27-28 July 2023, to which 49 African countries sent delegations, only 17 of which were represented at head of state level (Vines and Amare, 2023). Of the countries relevant to the paper, the participation of Heads of State from Uganda, Mozambique and Rwanda is the most significant (Teslova, 2023). Yet the declining participation and the African countries' opposition to Moscow's aggression is



an obvious response to the state of Russian-African relations (Vines and Amare, 2023). This move can be seen as a failure to improve Russian relations with East Africa.

The biggest problem for East African countries could be the impact of rising energy and grain prices on the world market and inflation. The response of the state will be limited, as with the general increase in prices and inflation, the budget will be strained, they will be even more dependent on external aid, assistance and units, if we look at the process from a security perspective. On the other hand, this external aid could flow in at an increasing rate, as Africa's raw material resources will make it increasingly important as Western powers try to find alternatives to Russian supply. The emergence of a growing number of foreign investors on the Cabo Delgado coast is a good example, with Tesla trying to replace its Chinese supply with Mozambican graphite (Investogist, 2022). If we start from the relationship that a state wants to secure its foreign investment, it cannot ignore the growing jihadist expansion and send units directly or indirectly into the region (Nhamirre, 2023). For the time being, this trend is continuing, with no signs of a reduction in the intervention forces or financial constraints. In other words, securing sources of raw materials remains the main preference of the intervention forces. This may, of course, change in the future as the war drags on and a possible world economic recession sets in. If this situation persists in the longer term, the global economic recession will have an impact on counterinsurgency, but in the short term it is not yet a major obstacle.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors hereby declare that they have no financial interest in this manuscript.

### **Notes on Contributor**

Tibor Pintér graduated from the University of Szeged with a Bachelor's and Master's degree in international studies. Since 2020 he is a PhD student at the University of Szeged Doctoral School of Law. His research topic is the relationship between ungoverned territories and jihadism through examples from East Africa. For this reason, his focus is on al-Shabaab in Somalia, the ADF in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the ASWJ in the Cabo Delgado region of Mozambique.

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