

Fears grow for British man missing after Islamist massacre in Mozambique

From the [TSky News](#) and [Deutsche Welle](#) Islamist militants have seized control of the town of Palma in Mozambique's northern province of Cabo Delgado,

The man – named by local sources as Philip Mawer – was among thousands of expatriates and locals caught up in Wednesday's [deadly assault](#) on the gas hub town of Palma in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado region. He is understood to have been with around 200 other expatriates at Palma's Amarula Lodge hotel, from where a convoy of around 17 vehicles made an escape run on Friday that ran into militant ambushes.

Meryl Knox's 40-year-old son Adrian Nel was shot dead in a vehicle he was trying to escape in with his father and younger brother. Six others in the same convoy attempting to flee the hotel were also killed. Mrs Knox said her husband and youngest son were not wounded in the attack and "managed to get away". They "went into the bush somewhere" until they were rescued on Saturday morning, she added. The pair are "too traumatised" to talk in detail about the attack and are waiting to return to South Africa with Adrian's body, according to Mrs Knox.

Two Britons, an Irish national and a New Zealand national were saved amid an ongoing search and rescue operation in and around Palma, according to a Sky source.

On Sunday night, around 1,400 survivors of the attack arrived in the provincial capital, Pemba, after being evacuated by boat. Witnesses had earlier spoke of Islamists going on the rampage in the town, leaving beheaded corpses on the streets.

Helicopters from the Dyck Advisory Group, a South African mercenary firm hired by the Mozambican government to fight the Islamists, have braved gunfire from the militants to fly rescue sorties of both foreigners and locals, some of them hiding in the bush. DAG is already thought to have rescued around 50 people.

Max Dyck, Chief Operating Officer of DAG, told The Telegraph that rescue operations were still ongoing on Sunday. He believed that up to ten of the 17 vehicles that fled the Amarula hotel had failed to make it to safety. Reports last night said that seven passengers in the convoy had died. There are fears that the Islamists, who claim to be linked to Islamic State, may have taken some others as hostages.

Security analysts believe the insurgent attack on Palma in Mozambique marks a significant turning point in the conflict.

The fighting in Cabo Delgado has left thousands of Mozambicans dead. But the insurgency has mostly been in rural areas. Now, the country's financial interests, and those of multi-nationals, are under severe threat. *Perhaps the world might take some notice now.*

Willem Els from the Institute for Security Studies agrees.

"It will be a turning point because I believe the international community's eyes will be focused on the area now," says Els. "I also believe that there will be a lot of pressure from investors on the government of Maputo to make more decisive actions and to intervene more decisively," he says.

Els says the regional and international community must cooperate to help Mozambique bring an end to the fighting. But he says the solution is not at the end of a barrel of a gun.

Pretoria has so far adopted quiet diplomacy – on fears that helping our neighbours (*eNCA is a news source new to me. It is*

a 24 hours TV news service run in South Africa and concentrating on SA and African news. As you would expect) could result in Islamist attacks on home soil. The escalation, and the possible deaths of South African citizens, could change that.

No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack. But local officials have blamed an insurgent group known as both Al-Shabaab and Al-Sunna wa Jama'a, which has links to the "Islamic State" militant network. Al-Shabaab is a different group than the one fighting in Somalia.