

Heidi Baker Announces Updated Prayer Request in Wake of Terrorist Threats

Internationally known speaker and missionary Heidi Baker updated her prayer request this week after Harvest ministry students were forced to leave Pemba, Mozambique, under terrorist threats.

“Pemba is more or less safe. We are taking precautions with curfews and the Harvest School students are going to continue in South Africa. Please continue to pray for the people of the entire province as many many villagers have fled their homes in fear. Thousands have been displaced. Many are sleeping outside without supplies. We are praying night and day for the right strategies to bring aid and comfort to our neighbors in such terrible distress,” Baker posted to her Facebook page.

Pemba is in the Cabo Delgado province, which has seen an increased level of violence since 2017.

Baker runs Iris Global Ministries, which has bases all across the world.

On Sunday, Iris issued an urgent prayer request for their base and ministry students.

“Since October 2017 there has been a group of militant extremists responsible for scores of attacks against government institutions and civilians in the north of Mozambique where we live. They are targeting anyone who opposes their brand of terror. In the last few weeks these attacks have intensified in frequency and brutality. Each attack has involved killing and burning houses. People were beheaded in at least six villages, two of which are within two hours drive of our Pemba base. Villagers are fleeing for their

lives, carrying nothing with them, and have become refugees in the bush or on offshore islands,” according to the official statement.

“We are praying for peace in Mozambique and our hearts mourn for the families who have lost loved ones. Our leadership team is in constant prayer, daily evaluating the situation to determine the best precautions for our staff. Based on the current situation, we feel confident to remain home in Pemba with our missionaries and Mozambican team. However, the government has canceled visas for our Harvest School students for security reasons, and they are having to leave within a few days for South Africa where the school will continue,” the official statement continues.

The Conversation reports *Al Sunnah wa Jama'ah* is Mozambique's own version of the Boko Haram.

Eric Morier-Genoud, a lecturer in African history at the Queen's University Belfast, writes:

The genesis of the current crisis has its roots in the militarisation of the *Al Sunnah wa Jama'ah* in 2016. In that year, tensions with other Muslims and the state increased and the movement began to prepare for armed action.

In October 2017 a group of 30 men attacked three police stations in Mocimboa da Praia. They killed two policemen, stole arms and ammunition, and occupied the town. Promising not to harm the residents, the guerrillas eventually withdrew to set up military bases in the forest.

Some scholars have suggested that the group is part of a broader international Islamic terrorist network. It is true that there are cross-border linkages at play: Mozambique's police have said that the guerrillas received military training in Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

But I would argue that Mozambique's new guerrilla movement is

primarily a local phenomenon with very specific historical and social dynamics. The movement emerged within a particular religious, social and ethnic group known as the Mwani. They feel they have been marginalised for decades by migration into their area, a lack of economic development, and their neighbours' political clout.

Several countries issued travel advisories to Mozambique earlier this month due to the ongoing violence.

Canada warned their citizens to avoid all travel to the Cabo Delgado province due to clashes between armed groups, security forces and residents.

"The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) advise against all but essential travel to the districts of Palma, Mocimboa de Praia and Macomia in Cabo Delgado province due to an increase in attacks by groups with links to Islamic extremism. This advice does not apply to islands off the coast of Mozambique," read the statement from the English government.

The United States strongly urged American citizens to evacuate the province.

"In light of information pointing to the likelihood of imminent attacks on government and commercial centers in the district headquarters of Palma, Cabo Delgado Province in the coming days, we strongly advise American citizens in the district headquarters of Palma to consider departing the area immediately. Those who elect to remain in Palma district are strongly advised to avoid travel to the district headquarters and to postpone visits to both government offices and retail locations, including markets. American citizens with planned travel to Palma District are strongly advised to postpone such travel," according to the statement.