During January, access to Mocimboa da Praia and Muidumbe districts, as well as parts of Palma and Macomia districts, remained inaccessible for humanitarian partners due to insecurity. Following an escalation of attacks in and around Palma and Muidumbe in late-2020 and the first days of January 2021—culminating in clashes between Government forces and non-state armed groups in Quitunda, adjacent to the Anungu natural gas site in Palma on 1 January—there was a reduction in the number of recorded conflict incidents in Cabo Delgado in the first three weeks of January. In late-January, attacks in Nangade were reported, primarily along the southeast border with Mocimboa da Praia district, where clashes with Government forces also occurred.

However, access to Macomia sede improved, and the town is now accessible both by road, due to a newly built bridge, and by air, with regular commercial flights. Access to localities around Macomia sede and north along the RN380 road is, however, not yet possible.

Road access to Palma district for humanitarian operations was constrained due to insecurity, but air access has been possible. In January, attacks were reported in Pundanhar, which is located along the only remaining road route into Palma. However, humanitarians undertook several missions to Palma by air in December and January to follow-up on pressing issues and deliver supplies, including WASH, nutrition and education, and vouchers for food assistance.

Administrative challenges have affected access in some districts in Cabo Delgado in January. At least 57 visas for international staff have been pending for 12.5 weeks on average, while customs clearance for emergency supplies can take up to 9.2 weeks on average, especially for Health and Shelter/Non-Food Items. The UN and the diplomatic community are working together with the Government of Mozambique to simplify visa approval processes and support the deployment of humanitarian personnel to concerned areas in Mozambique amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.