



“We regained hope of living with a family member again”

- Says Celina, 15, whose parents went missing after being taken by non-state armed forces in Cabo Delgado

In May 2021, Celina Jorge*, 15 years old, fled Palma together with her family in search of safe areas in the face of acts of violence that have plagued the northern districts of Cabo Delgado province since 2017. In the stampede fleeing, Celina's family was not able to take any goods with them, surviving only with the clothes they wore and with what they were finding in the fields and abandoned houses along the way.

To make matters worse, the group where Celina's family followed was attacked half-way by the non-state armed forces and her mother, as well as her stepfather, fell into the hands of these soldiers, forcing little Celina to follow the escape route along with her two younger sisters aged 10 and 12 years old. They headed for safety by



Celina, in the middle, with her two sisters

following other people who managed to escape from the armed forces. After eight days of wandering in the bushes of Palma, the group that Celina was following met another group, which, fortunately. One woman in this group was moved by Celina and her sister's situation and provided assistance. It was thanks to her assistance that Celina and her sisters got a lift that took them to the N'tele transit center, in the Montepuez district, southeast of Palma. After two weeks, Celina was transferred to the Mirate resettlement zone, where she has been living since June. Even without knowing the whereabouts or the fate of her parents, Celina tries to hope that better days will come.

Fortunately, Save the Children, with the support from Irish Aid, is carrying out humanitarian interventions in Mirate and Celina and her sisters are among the beneficiaries of this assistance, which helps alleviate in food, clothing and hygiene needs. With a big sigh, Celina says:

"My sisters and I enjoy the help that Save the Children is giving us. We have received rice and maize meal, salt, soap, toothpaste, baskets, slippers, a ball and much more. Also, Save the Children is giving us the assistance we need to meet our grandmother who is in Nampula. This is so important to us because other people who approached us before, could not give us any hope of having a member of our family to take care of us".

Unfortunately, stories like Celina's have become commonplace for displaced families and children in Cabo Delgado, but it's always heartbreaking to hear children say:

"When we were running, we came across a river and while we were trying to cross the river, the armed men arrived and took my mother and my stepfather. Me and my young sisters aged 10 and 12 we continued to flee along with other people until we managed to cross the river and we stayed 7 days in the bush before arriving in the village of Mbanja where a lady helped us get to get into a car that transported people to N'tele in Montepuez".

Since identifying the case of the 3 girls, including Celina who heads this family, Save the Children followed the entire process of case management, starting from the identification, evaluation, registration, monitoring plan and

evaluation of the case. It is now expected that this case is soon closed, as we have started the reunification process with a grandmother living in the neighboring province of Nampula.

Meanwhile, the children attend daily interventions of Psychosocial Support and case management guided by case workers, Psychosocial Support activists and Facilitators of Resilience of Children and Youth. On the other hand, they benefit from dignity, hygiene, recreation, reintegration and various clothing kits.

And as a way of ensuring the well-being of these children, there are coordinated activities between Social Action services, Mirate local government and community leaders who in their daily routines provide emotional support to these children.

Background / Project information

Celina and her young sisters were assisted under the Irish Aid project which is implemented by Save the Children in the districts of Mecufi and Montepuez, in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique. The project previously included Metuge district and consists mainly of case management, Psychosocial Support and distribution of reintegration, dignity and recreation kits, as well as hygiene and clothing. In Montepuez, where this case study was reported, Save the Children works in five communities. Mirate is about 60 kilometers from the city of Montepuez and hard to reach destination during the rainy season. Save the Children is the only humanitarian organization working in Mirate in coordination with government authorities.

Save the Children's intervention philosophy is to ensure that families can thrive and carry on their lives, even in face of the adversities caused by the armed conflict.

***Name changed to protect the identity**