

## Police tear up the Constitution and crush the people in the name of “superior orders” of the Nyusi Government

- The inhumane and disrespectful way in which the Police obstructed Azagaia’s funeral procession on Tuesday and the brutal violence they used this Saturday morning to prevent the march in honor of the popular rapper constitute unequivocal proof that the legend did not die. His body lies in Michafutene, far from the center of power, and his voice has been erased forever but, even so, Azagaia does not give up and continues to frighten the Frelimo Government. He chose to speak from the people to the people and today the people are honoring his fight, against all police violence. In life, Azagaia was always critical of the bad behavior of the Police and yesterday his fans felt what he denounced in his “Music of Rapid Intervention”. And he asked: “How long is a dictatorship in a democratic nation?” A current question that remains unanswered...



With no legal basis, the Police of the Republic of Mozambique (PRM) violently repressed the march in tribute to the musician Azagaia, unloading tear gas and rubber bullets on hundreds of young people. Acting as a protective force for the supreme interests of the ruling party, the Police tortured, injured, and arrested innocent citizens who took to the streets simply to honor the most representative *rapper of the people*.

The march had been communicated to the relevant authorities, notably the Maputo Municipal Council which, surprisingly, did not show any objection. In the letter sent to the organizers on the eve of the march (Friday, March 17), the mayor of the capital called for “the observance of all regulatory norms for the exercise of the right to demonstrate, namely about the route, the intended purposes and the limitation of time”. And that’s what the young people did, or rather wanted to do. From 7:00 am, they began to gather around the Eduardo Mondlane Statue, the starting point of the march.

But when they arrived, they were faced with a strong police contingent, duly armed and equipped to crush any attempt to march. And that’s what they did: first, they dispersed the approximately 500 people who were preparing to start the march, following the route previously defined and timely communicated to the authorities: Departure from the Eduardo Mondlane Statue, following the avenue with the same name, to then divert and walk down Karl Marx Avenue to Independence Square.

When faced with the fact that the Maputo Municipal Council became aware of the march and communicated it to the PRM itself, through the City Command, and to the State Information and Security Service (SISE), the police officers said that they had “superior orders” to prevent the homage to the musician Azagaya. “Superior orders” that flagrantly violate the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique (CRM) and trample on the principle of autonomy of local authorities, namely the Municipal Council of Maputo.

Under Article 253(1) of the CRM, the Police must guarantee law and order, safeguard the safety of people and property, public tranquility, respect the democratic rule of law, strict observance of human rights, and fundamental freedoms of citizens. The CRM establishes that the Police is non-partisan (article 253, paragraph 2) and, in the exercise of its functions, obeys the law and serves citizens and public and private institutions with exemption and impartiality.

Now, the action of the Police this Saturday morning went against the grain of their duties: it did not guarantee either law or order; it did not safeguard people’s safety and public tranquility; grossly offended the democratic rule of law and did not respect



the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. What’s more: by claiming that they were complying with “superior orders”, the Police demonstrated that they were, in fact, complying with a political agenda of the rul-

ing party; he did not obey the law nor did he serve the citizens impartially.

In the name of “superior orders”, agents from the Rapid Intervention Unit (UIR) spread tear gas across all the avenues and

streets where there were small concentrations of young people, fired rubber bullets, and arrested and tortured dozens of people. There are reports of several people injured, some seriously: a young man lost an eye after being hit by a rubber bullet. The UIR agent fired at close range. Another young man was tortured and left with a fractured left arm. All in the name of “superior orders”.

Despite the police violence, people gathered in small groups and, with fists in the air, shouted “Power to the People”, a refrain that became slogans shortly after Azagaia’s death. But the walks did not last more than 10 minutes, as the Police always appeared to abuse citizens who did not represent any danger.

Tear gas was thrown so indiscriminately and irresponsibly that it ended up hitting dozens of unsuspecting people who had no intention of participating in the march. Even passengers traveling on public transport were not spared. There were reports of people who fainted due to the inhalation of tear gas. The area close to the Statue of Eduardo Mondlane, the garden 28 de Maio, better known as Jardim dos Madjermanes, and Praça da Independência are the main points that smelled of tear gas.

On Tuesday, it was Samora Machel who, even with his back to the crowd present at Azagaia’s wake, witnessed the greatest popular tribute in Independence Square. In the same place where 36 years ago his body was veiled and honored by thousands of Mozambicans. Yesterday, it was Eduardo Mondlane’s turn, another national hero, to witness one of the worst repressions against the rights and freedoms of Mozambican citizens. Immortalized in the form of a statue and unable to act, Mondlane saw agents of the State for which he fought and died acting against the noble ideals he had for Mozambique, well recorded in his work “Fight for Moçambique”.

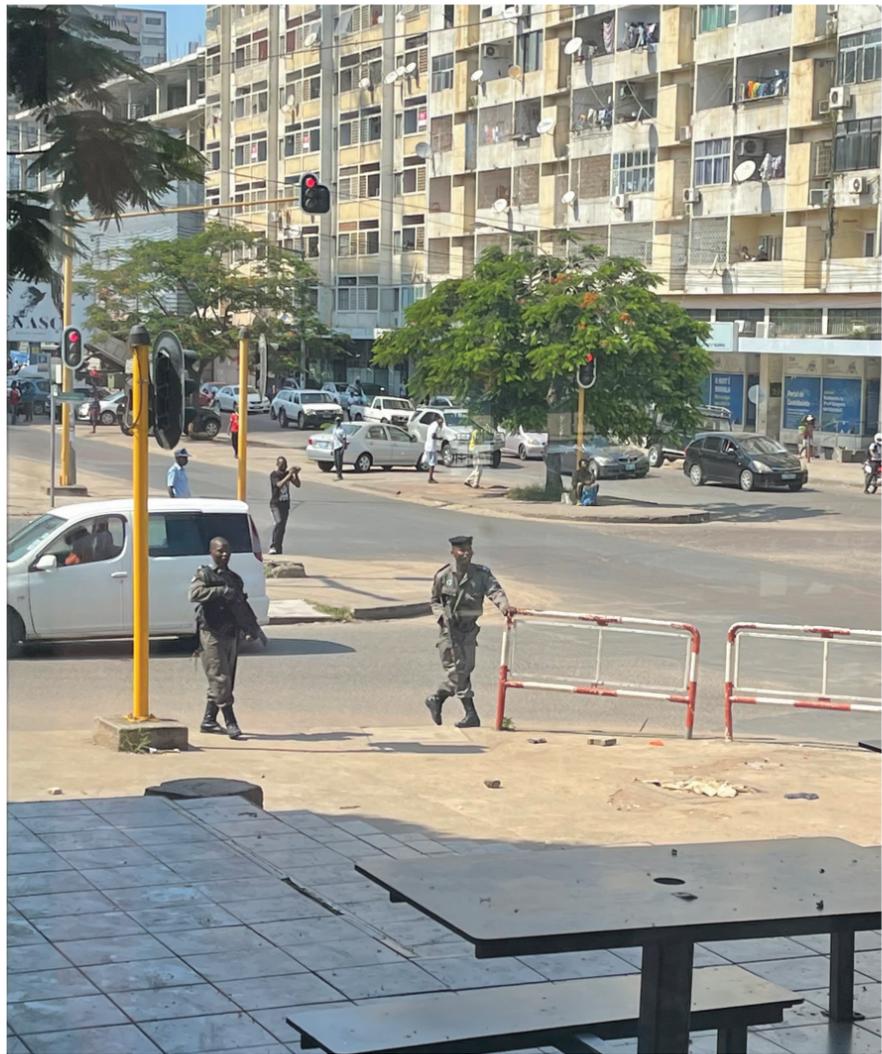
Police repression was also felt in Nampula, where the local mayor had also spoken out in favor of honoring Azagaia. But the Police, claiming “superior orders”, made the march unfeasible and fired tear gas at the people who were concentrated at the starting point. Quelimane was one of the few cities where the march took place without police impediment.

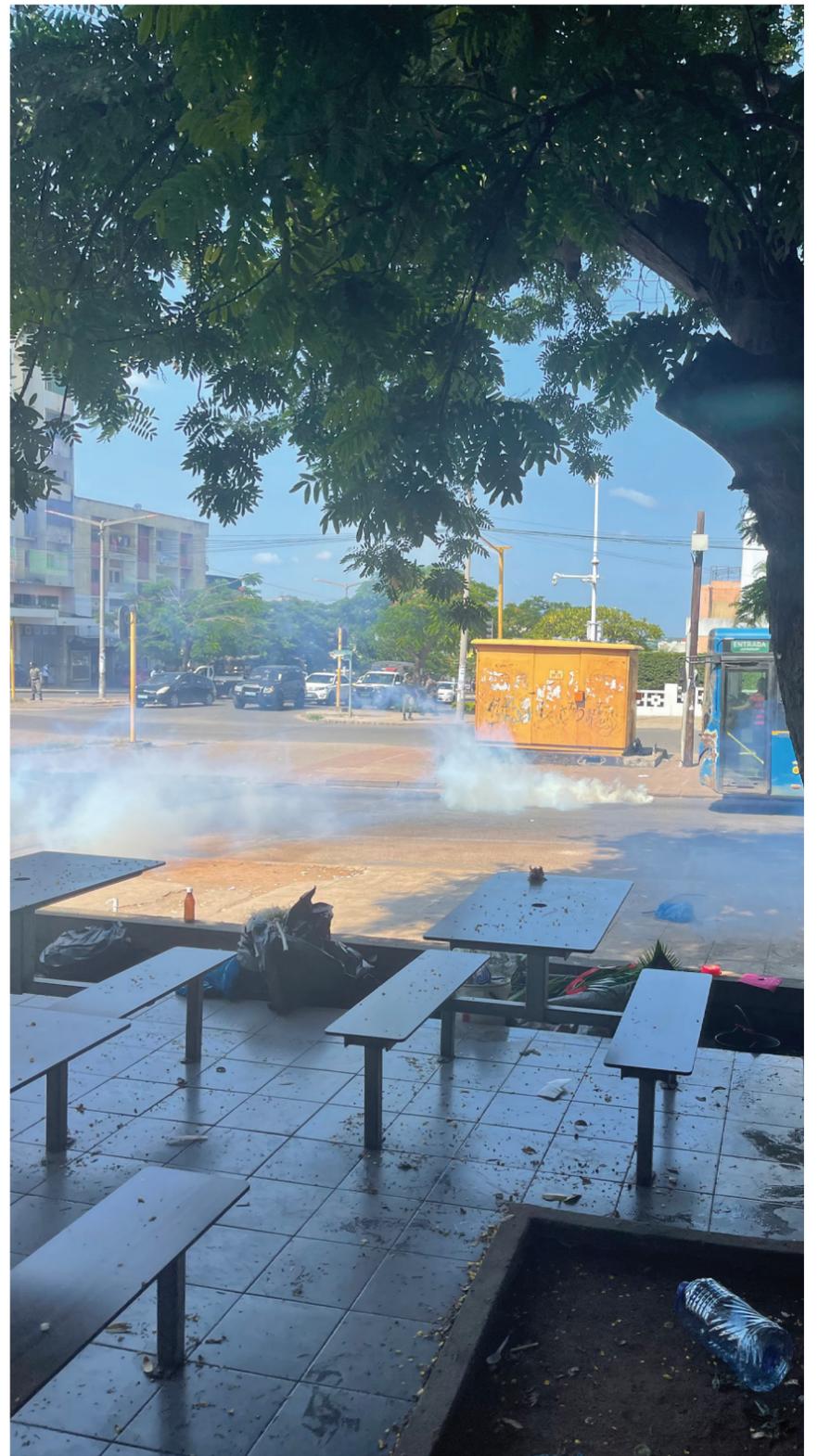
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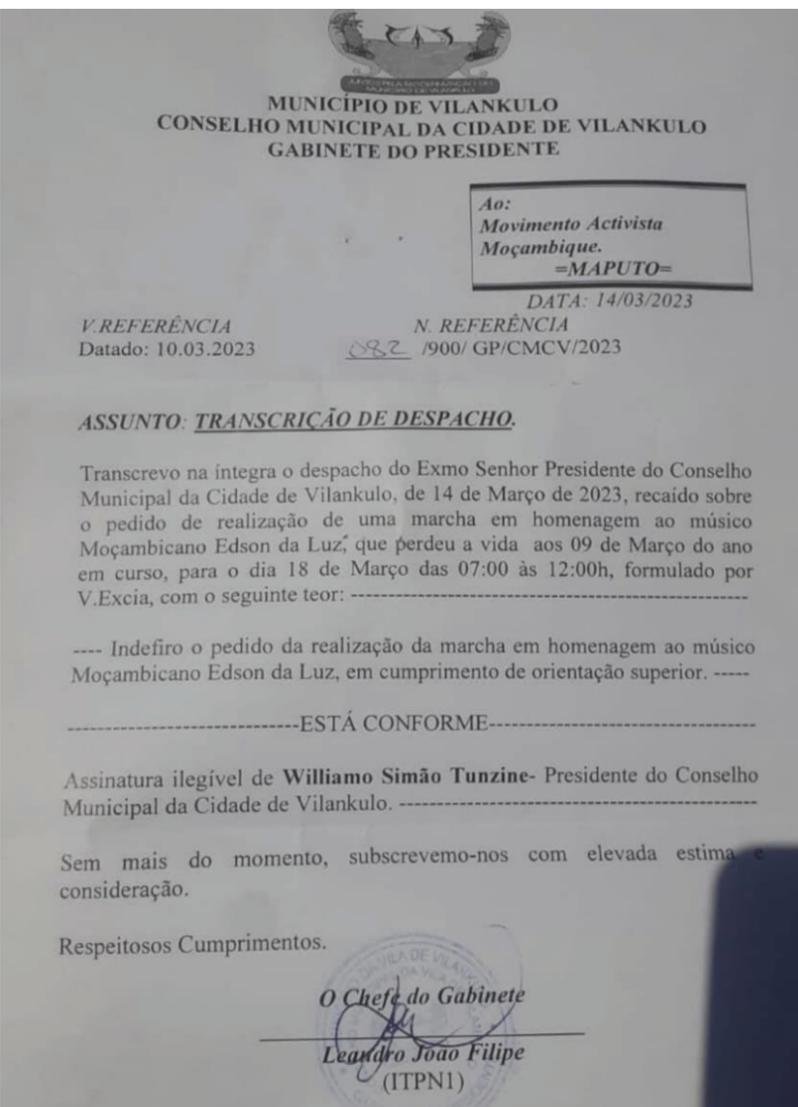
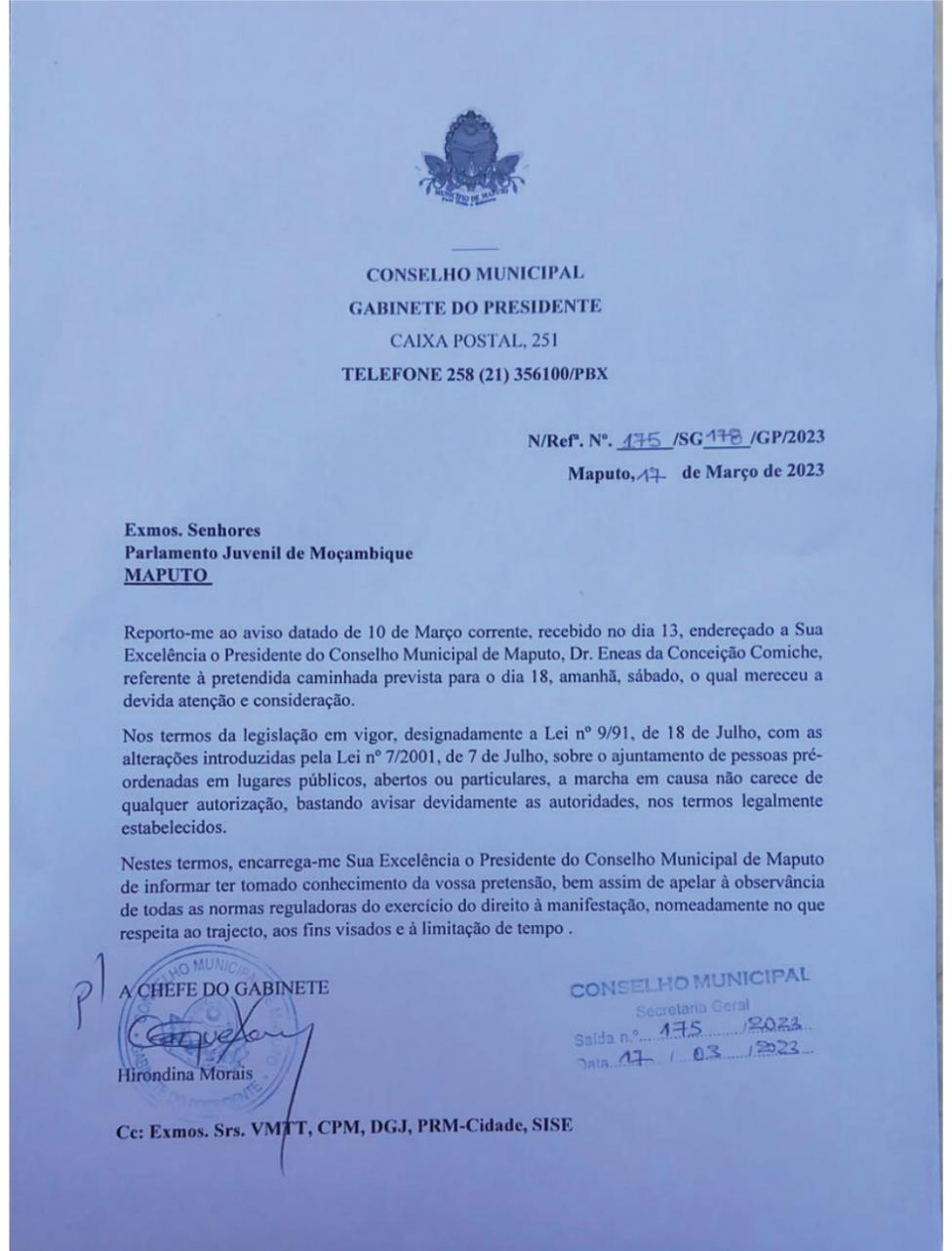
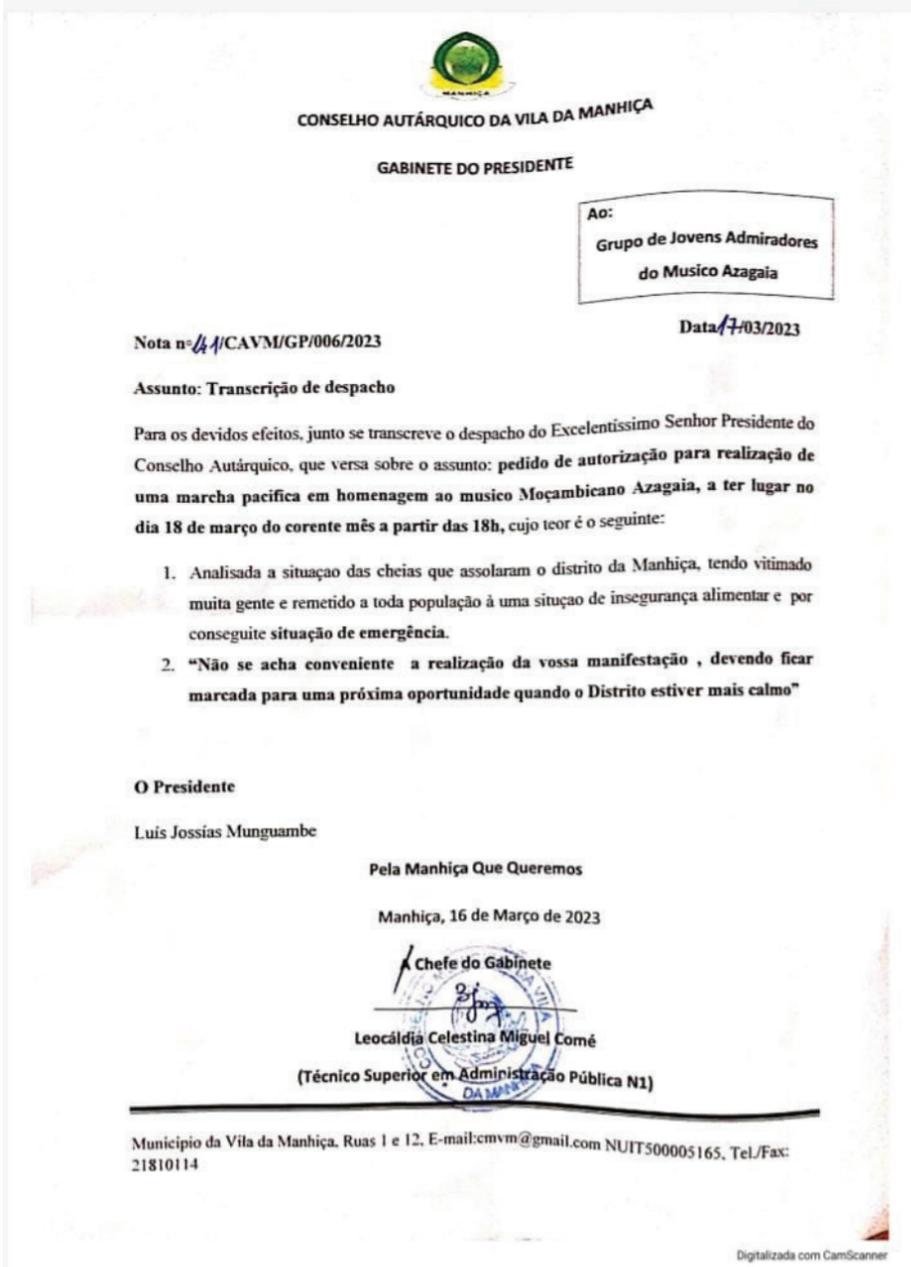
*“Imagine if a general strike was called.  
Will there be so many police for so much justice?  
Tear gas for so much oxygen?  
Will there be so much water for so much heartache?  
Until when is the dictatorship in a democratic nation?”*

Joaquín Chissano once said, “nothing is stronger than the people”. And the people will defeat the dictatorship...











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