

## Hundreds of workers stage protest, blocking entrance to FURA Ruby mining company



### Introduction

In this article, we explore the unfolding events at the FURA Company, where employees of the REEF Logistics Company have resorted to blocking the entrance in protest over unpaid wages, exerting pressure on the company. This devel-

opment is profoundly concerning as it represents a violation of Business and Human Rights Principles, with Labor Principles being a fundamental aspect. We examine the ramifications of this situation and its broader implications in the following discourse.



**In summary, the situation at REEF serves as a reminder of the persistent challenges despite ongoing progress. The failure to fulfill workers' wages and address financial obligations not only contravenes international human rights standards but also underscores the imperative for robust regulatory frameworks and effective grievance mechanisms.**



## Analyzing the situation from a Business and Human Rights perspective:

The recent blockade staged by a hundred workers from REEF, a logistics company, at the main entrance of the camp and the mining area housing FURA's ruby washing plant, aimed at compelling REEF to fulfill its obligations, highlights significant concerns regarding business ethics and human rights.

Firstly, the protracted non-payment of wages spanning over three months starkly contravenes the fundamental right of workers to receive fair and timely compensation for their labor – a principle enshrined in international human rights standards, i.e. United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Timely payment of salaries is a fundamental aspect of an employment contract. When employers fail to meet this obligation, it erodes the trust and loyalty employees have placed in them. Delayed salaries send a message that the employer does not prioritize the well-being and financial security of their workers. This not only undermines the livelihoods of the impacted workers but also perpetuates cycles of poverty and economic instability within the community.

Secondly, the failure of REEF to settle its outstanding 17 million meticais debt owed to the workers, according to the secretary of the local union committee, raises significant concerns regarding the company's adherence to principles of business integrity and responsible corporate conduct. Engaging in sincere negotiations and meeting financial obligations are fundamental to ethical business practices. REEF's inability to fulfill its financial commitments undermines its credibility and disrupts operations for other businesses involved.

Moreover, the blockade initiated by the workers as a means of exerting pressure underscores the power disparity between employees and employers, as well as the inadequacy of mechanisms for promptly resolving labor disputes. It underscores the imperative for stronger regulatory frameworks and effective grievance mechanisms to address violations of labor rights and

ensure accountability within the business sector.

The situation unfolding at REEF presents a complex intersection of business ethics and human rights concerns, highlighting the critical need for effective ways to tackle such challenges. This incident underscores the importance of ensuring that business practices align with international human rights standards. It also emphasizes the significance of Mozambique's ongoing efforts to develop a National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights. The NAP serves as a crucial framework aimed at guiding businesses in respecting human rights, aligning with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. It provides a roadmap for integrating human rights considerations into business operations and decision-making processes.

Given recent events, the work led by the Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CDD) and the Judicial Legal Training Center (CFJJ) gains even more importance. The project aims to enhance the abilities of the judiciary, human rights defenders, and the private sector to protect and uphold human rights in business. This directly addresses the issues raised by the REEF case.

Through collaboration with the Judicial Legal Training Center, this initiative not only seeks to improve legal expertise but also aims to promote a culture of accountability and transparency within the business community. By equipping stakeholders with the necessary knowledge and tools to address complex human rights challenges, such as fair pay and resolving grievances, the project contributes significantly to the broader goal of encouraging ethical business practices and adherence to human rights norms.

In summary, the situation at REEF serves as a reminder of the persistent challenges despite ongoing progress. The failure to fulfill workers' wages and address financial obligations not only contravenes international human rights standards but also underscores the imperative

for robust regulatory frameworks and effective grievance mechanisms. By confronting these challenges head-on and fostering dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders, we can

strive towards fostering a business environment that upholds ethical principles, respects human rights, and contributes to sustainable and inclusive development in Mozambique.



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