



DAY 2 OF "MATAVELE CASE" TRIAL

The Elísio de Sousa phenomenon, the revelations of the platoon driver and the GOE commander

The second day of the trial of Anastácio Matavele's "murderers" had a tense start. Elísio de Sousa, who was absent in the first session, was present for the hearing of his client Edson Sílica, the Toyota Mark X driver used by the platoon on the fateful October 7. His notorious and controversial style on social media came to the fore in the room when he immediately questioned the fact

that the Matavele family assistant was represented by two lawyers.

Félix Mucache and Flávio Menete argued that the law does not prevent an assistant from being represented by two lawyers, but Elísio de Sousa insisted that only one should be in the room. Basically, the defense scheme of Matavele's murderers was "shaken" by the presence of the former president



of the Bar Association, called to reinforce the legal assistant team of the victim's family.

However, because Judge Ana Laquidão had already authorized the presence of Flávio Menete at the beginning of the trial, an agreement was reached: the two lawyers will continue to work side by side in the courtroom, but only one can intervene in each session. Yesterday was Félix Mucache's day and today it could be the turn of the former president of the Bar Association to question the defendants.

When the judge was preparing to start the hearing of Edson Silica, Elísio de Sousa raised yet another "previous issue" that bothered him: the presence of two magistrates representing the Public

Prosecutor's Office (MP). Leonardo Cumbe and Luís Vianheque responded by stating that nothing prevents the Public Prosecutor's Office from being represented by two magistrates. "We are here because we were appointed by the Superior Council for the Judiciary of the Public Prosecutor's Office. You are raising previous questions that should have been raised on the first day of the trial", said one of the magistrates. Elísio de Sousa referred to his past as a public prosecutor to say that he had never witnessed a similar situation.

Time was passing by and the judge had to intervene to restore order and start the hearing of the defendants.

Edson Silica: from a Counter-Terrorism Unit member to the terror squad driver

According to the defendant questioned by the court, Edson Silica has been in the police force for 13 years, with the rank of sub-inspector and, at the time of the murder, he was a patrolman of the Special Operations Group (GOE), assigned to the Terrorism Combat and Hostage Rescue Unit.

But on October 5, 6, and 7, the GOE patrolman assumed the role of the driver of the platoon that terrorized the city of Xai-Xai and put Gaza on the script of the crimes committed by the "death

squads". Dressed in the unmistakable orange prison suit and slippers, he answered part of the questions seated, for he has not yet fully recovered from the October accident.

Unlike Agapito Matavele and Euclídio Mapulasse who left the accident site on their own, Edson Silica was rescued to the hospital where he regained consciousness. "I just remember that, when trying to overtake, I noticed that the car was going to hit headlong against an incoming vehicle. I tried to

swerve, but I lost control of the vehicle”, he told the court.

At some points during the hearing, Edson repeated Mapulasse’s testimony exactly, such as, for example, assuming a neutral role in the crime; naming the fugitive Agapito Matavele as the “mastermind” of the murder and one of the snipers; the self-portrait of a police officer who goes on a mission without knowing what it is about; the redefinition of the meetings at the Centro de Recrutamento Militar and “Xirico” bar as simple meetings for beer; and assigning blame at those who cannot defend themselves (the dead).

Even so, there were contradictions: Edson said that Tudelo Guirugo (the GOE commander) participated in the meetings of October 4, 5, and 6, however, on Tuesday Mapulasse had said that he only saw Commander Tudelo at the bar; Edson said that when he put the Toyota Mark X in parallel with the victim’s vehicle, the order to fire came

from the back seat and Agapito and Martins Williams lowered the windows and started shooting at point-blank. Yesterday, Mapulasse said that the shots started to sound after Agapito gave the order: “Shoot!”.

Asked if he knew who the victim was, Edson replied that Nóbrega Chaúque (who died in the accident) had said, minutes before the crime, that they were going to “assault an old man with a lot of money”. But he did not know or ask why the “old man with a lot of money” was not assaulted but riddled with bullets.

About the origin of the Toyota Mark X, Edson Silica gave his version stating that it was Nóbrega who asked him to keep the car for a few days. “He didn’t have a license, so he asked me to drive. We went to where we had parked the car and he handed me the keys, but he didn’t give me any documents”. This was on October 5. But orders to collect the squad mates on October 6 and 7 came from Agapito.

Elísio de Sousa: the “one-man show” that disturbed the session

After the invective against the pair of state magistrates and against lawyers from the Matavele family, Elísio de Sousa returned to the scene when the judge passed the floor to others. Repeatedly and even tiringly, Elísio de Sousa questioned the state magistrates, interrupted them, protested their questions, judging them to be biased, sometimes subjective and suggestive, giving free law lectures.

Because of the judge’s leniency, there was real confusion in the room. However, the state magistrates did not give up and reminded Elísio that the court, not he, was in charge of the trial. “Doctor Elísio de Sousa is not the president of this session. If you want to be the protagonist, it won’t be here”, they warned.

The judge gave the floor to the lawyer for the Matavele family. Félix Mucache was still asking Edson Silica the third question when he was interrupted by Elísio de Sousa, who already assumed the role

of correcting questions. He protested the question about the name of the bank through which the defendant received his salaries, repeating that it was confidential and private information; he repudiated the question about the number of elements that make up a platoon and a company, stating that it was a sensitive issue and it was a state secret.

In the midst of several interruptions, the lawyer for the Matavele family had to appeal for the intervention of the court, which was tolerant of indiscipline in the room.

But the most hilarious moment was when Judge Ana Liquidão gave the floor to the defense. Elísio de Sousa warned his defense colleagues that he would be the only lawyer to question his client. And he used the Penal Procedure Code to support his innovative thesis according to which the defendant can only

be questioned by his lawyer and not by other members of the defense. He was opposed and all the lawyers asked Edson Silica questions.

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Tudelo: the GOE commander who collected the AK 47 used in the crime

A police officer for 27 years, Tudelo Guirugo holds the rank of chief inspector and at the time of the crime, he commanded GOE in Gaza. On October 7, Tudelo was not with the snipers in the vehicle and complained that he was unaware of the mission that his direct subordinates had that day. But that does not minimize the level of his involvement in the crime.

According to the case file, Tudelo said that it was he who selected the five special agents who were part of the platoon and that he did so at the behest of Alfredo Macuácuá, the Rapid Intervention Unit (UIR) commander in Gaza. Later, he presented a new version, saying that after receiving the order from his superior, he commissioned Agapito Matavele to form the platoon to carry out the mission.

However, yesterday, he denied his statements and said that he involved the name of his superior (Alfredo Macuácuá) because he was desperate and thought that by so doing, he could escape. But he did not escape, because after he was suspended, he was accused and detained later, and today he is in prison clothes.

He confirmed that he was present at the meetings on October 4, 5 and 6, but repeated his colleagues' version that nothing related to the mission was discussed. They were just meeting for a glass of beer.

Despite insisting that he knew nothing about the mission of his subordinates, Tudelo was the person with whom Agapito Matavele spoke over his cell phone on three occasions and they exchanged 21 messages when Agapito was on the run. In other words, Agapito left for an unauthorized and unknown mission by his commander, but it is this superior who called and told him to go get the weapon hidden in

the cemetery in Xai-Xai.

At the court, he confirmed that he went to the cemetery alone to fetch the weapon and at that time (17:00) he already knew that the AK 47 had been used by Agapito and other colleagues in the murder of Anastácio Matavele. However, he did not share the information with his colleagues and went alone to the cemetery to collect the weapon used in the crime and took it back to the arms depot without checking anything.

The only thing he did together with the security at the arms depot was to count the bullets in the AK 47. "There were 29", he answered inconclusively, as he said he did not check how many bullets were in the weapon when it was checked out the day before. The lawyers of the Matavele family asked, and rightly so, whether he even considered it normal for a commander to take a weapon from the cemetery and return it to the arms depot without checking whether it was used.

Once again, Elísio de Sousa protested the question because he considered the word "normal" subjective. But when he when his turn to make questions came, he repeatedly used the same word and the judge did not spare him.

When he returned the gun, Tudelo forged his signature to evade investigations, but yesterday he revealed that he has two signatures. He does not know whether they continue to pay his salaries. He says that no disciplinary proceedings have been opened against him, despite his inappropriate and reprehensible conduct.

Today, Thursday, the trial continues with the hearing of more police officers involved in the crime.

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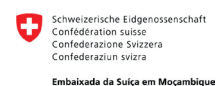
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