



Matavele's son suspects the existence of political motivations in the crime and says that SERNIC did not return his father's cell phone

On the first day of hearing of deponents, the Judicial Court of Gaza Province inquired the family of Anastácio Matavele and two employees of the Forum of Non-Governmental Organizations in Gaza (FONGA), the institution where the victim was the Executive Director.

Licínio Matavele, the third to testify, entered the courtroom with confidence: "I know who killed Dad. It was these gentlemen sitting here at the back, the police officers", he said, pointing to the defendants. Worried by the surprise statement by Anastácio Matavele's son, the defendants did not hide their discomfort and were agitated in the silent proce-

dings of the trial sessions.

When asked by Judge Ana Liquidão if he knew the motivations for his father's murder, Licínio did not hesitate to reply: "I don't know what the motivations were. Better than anyone, only they can tell", he said, turning back to the defendants who were already shriveled with the first statement at point-blank.

While the judge was taking note, Matavele's son threw a suspicion: "I think Dad's death was politically motivated. He was a social activist and a member of the civil society. My father knew the reality of this province and as the Executive Director of



FONGA, he placed people's concerns in the appropriate forums. It is likely that there are people who did not like the way he addressed society's concerns", he said, stressing that he didn't know anyone specifically.

Confronted with the defendants' version (Edson Silica) that the mission was "to steal from an old man with a lot of money", Licínio was adamant: "This is blasphemy". And he justified: "My father knew of the needs I was going through and if he had a lot of money, I would be the first person he would help".

Matavele's son was not the only deponent to undervalue the version of "an old man with a lot of money", a last-minute attempt by the defendants to make up a politically motivated murder using brushstrokes from a simple armed robbery.

In fact, Sónia Tembe, the secretary of FONGA's board, said that on the fateful October 7, Anastácio Matavele didn't even have money to buy fuel for his car. "After directing the opening of the election observer training, the Director left the room and said that he needed to fill up his car, but he had no

money. A colleague gave him a thousand meticaís, and he said goodbye and left".

Actually, the only money that "the old man with a lot of money" - in the defendants' version - brought when he was riddled with bullets was a thousand meticaís that he had just received at "Salgadinho da Mamã Argentina", the salon where the training took place, located on the road leading to Xai-Xai beach.

"A mason called saying that I should get a car to help the Director because he had just been shot in the Mocita area. When our colleagues went to the scene, he had already been rescued", said Sónia Tembe, Matavele's Secretary.

She was the person who called Matavele early in the morning and said that the Director of FONGA had no trip scheduled for that day: "We were waiting for him to deliver the welcoming address to the training participants. He came and directed the opening ceremony. He left with a promise to return for the closing" - a promise that Matavele never fulfilled, because he was riddled with bullets minutes after leaving the "Salgadinho da Mamã Argentina", she said.

SERNIC has not yet returned the Samsung cell phone from Matavele

Ironically, Abílio Matavele was at "Mahumane bust stop", the place where the Toyota Mark X that transported the sinister platoon of officers of the Special Operations Group (GOE) overturned. He was waiting for his car to be repaired at the garage that operates

near the site when he saw a car coming at a high speed and suddenly it overturned.

"We all approached to help the victims. The accident had caused a lot of dust, but we could see people injured under the car". And it was amid the dust that "a

man with a big gun" appeared running towards the cemetery. It was Agapito Matavele who was on the run with the AK 47 used in the crime which was later retrieved in the cemetery by defendant Tudelo Guirugo, GOE Commander.

"Then we saw more guns in the car and we all left the place out of fear. We realized that the people in the car were not just casual people". But the confirmation that the victims of the accident were not casual people came 10 minutes later when Abílio Matavele learnt that they had shot his brother.

He ran to the scene, but the victim had already been taken to the hospital. He found the car with the broken rear and right-side windows and counted, at least, 10 bullet holes in the driver's door. When he was asked

about the goods in the car, he replied that he managed to recover some, including his brother's four cell phones.

However, agents from the National Criminal Investigation Service (SERNIC) requested the cell phone that the victim used frequently to collect more information and they never returned it. "I don't remember the name of the agent who got the cell phone and we have not yet recovered it to this day, and we don't even know what kind of information they managed to find out."

Matavele's son added that he went to the police station to get back his father's Samsung cell phone, but was informed that the device was at SERNIC. "I went to SERNIC and there they said the cell phone was at the Prosecutor's Office in Maputo".

Matavele's son gets emotional when talking about the emptiness that his father left in the family

When the family lawyer asked Licínio to talk about the damage that Matavele's murder brought to the family, he summed it up by saying that "Dad was the pillar of the family". It was Matavele who took care of his sick mother, he took care of his sick wife, gave assistance to the family, paid for the children's school fees, including Licínio's.

"Dad wanted to build a house that would serve as a base for the family, but with his death, all the projects stopped. And these police officers, who continue to receive visits and food from their families every day, are responsible for that", he exploded, covered with a lot of emotion.

The judge appealed for silence and said he was not the only one who was concerned about what had happened. "The State is also concerned, that is why we are all here. Even if there had been no private complaint from the family, these gentle-

men would still be here. This is a sign that the State is looking for the truth to apply justice", explained Ana Liquidão.

However, the judge's call for attention exacerbated Licínio's emotions. "Your Honor, I understand your call for attention. But when you say that the State is concerned, are you talking about this State which cannot locate an individual who is said to be a fugitive. What State is this that cannot locate an individual in its territory? Is he really on the run?", he asked.

In addition to economic losses, Matavele's son said that his father's murder is causing psychological problems in the family, especially for the victim's grandchildren. "I have a niece who keeps asking about her grandfather. And a nephew who is terrified of policemen. He doesn't want to hear about the police. He's traumatized".

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FONGA governing board wanted to dismiss Matavele

The deponents (family members and Matavele's colleagues) who were heard yesterday never knew of any death threat against the Matavele. But almost all of them heard from the "press reports" that "FONGA corporate board" was calling for the dismissal of Matavele from the position of Executi-

ve Director.

The reports were announced in May 2019 and the deponents cited the names of Leovigildo, Chairman of the Supervisory Board, and Manuel Muchabje, Chairman of the Board of Directors, as the faces of the contest. Meanwhile, Anastácio Matavele was

killed at a time when preparations were being made for the General Assembly to discuss the differences and, probably, elect new governing bodies.

Eldina Nhantave, a FONGA employee, and Stélio Manjate, the victim's nephew, were also heard, yesterday, as deponents. Nhantave recounted that it was she who took the car that was with Matavele on October 7 to "Dona Arminda's" home.

"Matavele's son called to say he wanted to leave

the car that was with his father at FONGA. As we don't have enough parking space, I asked Arminda to leave the car at her home. Arminda is the owner of that car, but it was often ridden by the Director and she used FONGA's car, which could no longer drive long distances", she explained.

Today, the trial continues with the hearing of more deponents, namely the members of the Rapid Intervention Unit (UIR).

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