



RIGHT TO PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY: JUSTICE, MEMORY, AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN MOZAMBIQUE

CAMPAIGN TO COMMEMORATE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

DECEMBER 3–10, 2024

I. Context

International Human Rights Day, celebrated annually on December 10, provides a global opportunity to reflect on the progress and challenges in the promotion and protection of human rights. In 2024, this date takes on even greater significance in Mozambique, where the right to peaceful assembly—recognized as a cornerstone of any democracy—is under severe threat.

In recent months, peaceful protests in Mozambique have been systematically repressed, leading to tragedies including the loss of over 80 lives, hundreds of injuries, and arbitrary detentions. These actions not only violate fundamental rights but also erode public trust in state institutions and undermine the civic space necessary for dialogue and citizen participation.

Legal Framework on the Right to Peaceful Assembly

The right to peaceful assembly is protected

under both international and national legal instruments, underscoring its importance as a fundamental human right:

1. *International Instruments:*

- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):** Article 20 guarantees everyone the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
- **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR):** Article 21 protects the right to peaceful assembly, emphasizing that any restrictions must be strictly necessary and proportionate to preserve public order, health, morals, or the rights and freedoms of others.
- **African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights:** Article 11 guarantees the right to free and peaceful assembly, highlighting its importance for participation in public life and democratic governance.



2. National Legislation:

- **Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique:**
 - Article 51 enshrines the right to peaceful assembly and demonstration as a fundamental right of all citizens.
 - Article 56 emphasizes the role of citizen participation in political and social life, encouraging active engagement in nation-building.
- **Law on the Right to Assembly (Law No. 9/91, of July 18):** Establishes principles and regulations for the exercise of this right in Mozambique, ensuring that demonstrations remain peaceful and organized without compromising public order.

Despite these legal guarantees, the reality on the ground reflects a troubling pattern of repression, with security forces frequently resorting to disproportionate use of force, resulting in deaths, injuries, and arbitrary detentions. These practices contravene not only Mozambique's international commitments but also the core principles of the country's Constitution.

The Importance of International Human Rights Day in 2024

In this challenging context, International Human Rights Day in Mozambique seeks to emphasize the importance of the right to peaceful assembly as an indispensable element in building a democratic and inclusive society. This day presents an opportunity to:

1. **Honor the Victims:** Pay tribute to those who lost their lives due to state repression and recognize their struggles as milestones in the defense of human rights in the country.
2. **Demand Justice:** Advocate for accountability for the violations committed and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.
3. **Promote Respect for Human Rights:** Conduct awareness campaigns targeting authorities and civil society to underscore the importance of respecting the right to peaceful assembly, aligning Mozambique with international human rights standards.

The repression of peaceful protests is not only a violation of individual rights but also a barrier to the dialogue needed for conflict resolution and democratic strengthening. Celebrating International Human Rights Day in 2024 is, therefore, a call for all sectors of Mozambican society to unite in defending civic space, freedom of expression, and respect for human dignity.

II. General Objectives

- To celebrate International Human Rights Day with a focus on the right to peaceful assembly;
- To honor victims of violent repression during peaceful protests;

- To promote justice and accountability for acts of violence;
- To raise awareness and engage society and authorities on the importance of respecting and protecting the right to peaceful assembly.

Specific Objectives

- Highlight the stories and profiles of the victims, recognizing their role in the struggle for fundamental rights.
- Build solidarity with the victims' families through visits and direct support.
- Pressure institutions such as the Attorney General's Office (PGR) for transparent investigations and justice for the victims.
- Engage the police and other state agents in dialogues on the importance of respecting and protecting the right to peaceful assembly.
- Promote public awareness and discussions through webinars and educational initiatives.

III. Strategies and Actions

Campaign Period: December 3–10, 2024

1. Documentation and Publication of Victims' Profiles

- Collect and share information about the victims on digital platforms and printed materials.

2. Visits to Victims' Families

- Engage directly with the victims' families to offer solidarity and emotional support, while identifying specific needs for assistance.

3. Advocacy Actions Targeting the Attorney General's Office (PGR)

- Submit petitions and open letters demanding transparent investigations and accountability for crimes committed during protests.

4. Engagement with the Police

- Conduct meetings with police leadership to discuss the importance of democratic policing practices and respect for the right to peaceful assembly.

5. Webinars and Educational Sessions

- Organize virtual panels with human rights experts, civil society representatives, and survivors to discuss the right to peaceful assembly, its significance, and the challenges in the Mozambican context.



IV. Expected Outcomes

- Increased visibility of human rights violations related to peaceful protests in Mozambique;
- Strengthened national and international solidarity with the victims and their families;
- Progress in holding perpetrators accountable for acts of violence;
- Greater awareness among police forces and state agents about respecting the right to peaceful assembly;
- Enhanced civil society engagement in advocating for peaceful assembly as a cornerstone of functional democracy.

V. Conclusion

This campaign is a call to action for a fairer Mozambique, where the right to peaceful assembly is protected and respected. By highlighting the lives lost and the impact of repression, the campaign seeks to transform grief into a force for change and justice. Together, we can build a society where human rights are truly guaranteed.

