

## Deadly Accidents Raise Safety Concerns in Moatize Mines



On the morning of July 22, two employees of the Portuguese subcontractor Mota Engel lost their lives in a tragic work accident at Mine 2, section 4, located in the district of Moatize, Tete. According to reports, workers were inflating the tire of the “777 off-road” truck, but the lack of essential equipment,

a clamp, to keep the tire belt in place, resulted in the tragedy. The lack of safety and inadequate equipment were decisive factors in the accident, causing the instant death of the two workers. One of them was dragged more than 50 meters due to the force of the equipment, highlighting the seriousness of the incident.



**The incident that occurred at Mota Engel is a clear example of negligence in matters of health and safety at work. The lack of adequate equipment put the lives of workers at risk, violating their fundamental right to life. This tragic event should serve as an urgent warning to companies and authorities to prioritize the safety and well-being of workers, ensuring that such incidents are not repeated.**





The fatal accident occurred in the context of constant complaints from workers about the exhausting workload they face, leaving them without adequate time to rest. Despite frequent reports of mining accidents operated by the giant Indian company that explores mineral coal in Mozambique, there is no effective government intervention, whether at the provincial or central level, through the Ministry of Labor. Workers are calling for an urgent review of current working hours, hoping the recent fatality will force government intervention.

Mota-Engil has been present in Mozambique since 1991<sup>1</sup>, leading the Engineering and Construction sector, and participating in major projects in the country. In addition, it operates in the environmental area through Ecolife and in road concessions with the Zambezi Motorways. However, the company faces severe criticism for its lack of safety and poor working conditions, as evidenced by the recent accident.

The Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)<sup>2</sup> highlight that companies, regardless of where they operate, have a responsibility to respect human rights, avoiding infringing these rights and mitigating negative impacts when they occur. UNGP No. 12 specifies that recognized international human rights include the rights set out in the International Bill of Human Rights and the International Labor Organization (ILO) principles. Therefore, Mota-Engil, like other companies, must prevent or mitigate

negative impacts related to its activities.

In the labor context, Mozambique has signed and ratified several international instruments, especially the ILO conventions. The Labor Inspection, according to articles 259 and 260 of the Labor Law, is responsible for monitoring and ensuring compliance with labor standards and may take immediate measures to prevent imminent dangers to the life or physical integrity of workers.

Unions have denounced numerous violations of labor rights by national and multinational companies, including the prohibition of freedom of association, lack of social dialogue to improve working conditions, wage inequality, exclusion of national workers from leadership positions, lack of opportunities for professional training, violence and harassment, negligence in occupational safety, and refusal of conciliation and voluntary arbitration to resolve labor disputes. Furthermore, there is a limitation of the powers of labor inspectors and the refusal to withhold contributions from unionized workers at source.

The incident that occurred at Mota Engel is a clear example of negligence in matters of health and safety at work. The lack of adequate equipment put the lives of workers at risk, violating their fundamental right to life. This tragic event should serve as an urgent warning to companies and authorities to prioritize the safety and well-being of workers, ensuring that such incidents are not repeated.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mota-engil.com/en/mota-engil-in-the-world/international-presence/>

<sup>2</sup> PONDH n° 11. See also, United Nations, Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner – The corporate responsibility to respect human rights: An interpretive guide, ob. cit. P. 9.




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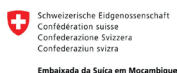
#### INFORMAÇÃO EDITORIAL:

**Propriedade:** CDD – Centro para Democracia e Direitos Humanos  
**Director:** Prof. Adriano Nuvunga  
**Editor:** André Mulungo  
**Autor:** Hélio Siteo  
**Layout:** CDD

**Contacto:**  
Rua Dar-Es-Salaam Nº 279, Bairro da Sommerschild, Cidade de Maputo.  
Telefone: +258 21 085 797

 CDD\_moz  
**E-mail:** info@cddmoz.org  
**Website:** <http://www.cddmoz.org>

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