



# BOLETIM SOBRE DIREITOS HUMANOS



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## SERNIC Commits State Crimes Against Protesters in Mozambique

- The National Criminal Investigation Service (SERNIC) is directly implicated in a systematic and deliberate campaign of violent repression against protesters in Mozambique, according to our investigation. Under the guise of maintaining public security, this repression targets protest participants and residents of marginalized neighborhoods, who face constant intimidation and violence.



The documented actions of SERNIC reveal an institutionalized strategy that goes beyond common human rights violations, amounting to state crimes against the civilian population. These practices include summary executions, the use of lethal force, clandestine operations to identify and track young protesters, and the use of civilian vehicles for infiltration into communities.

SERNIC's involvement, as a state entity, demonstrates that the repression is not the result of disorganized police conduct but rather an orchestrated policy aimed at suppressing legitimate social movements. This scenario highlights the urgent need to scrutinize the role of public security institutions in Mozambique and to hold those responsible for these atrocities accountable.

## SERNIC's role in violent repression

The CDD investigation attributes 12 of the 26 deaths recorded in Maputo during the protests to SERNIC. These executions took place during nighttime operations in neighborhoods such as Patrice Lumumba, Urbanização, Luís Cabral (Chinhembane), Maxaquene, and Polana Caniço. SERNIC agents, dressed in civilian clothing, infiltrated protest crowds to identify and record the addresses of young participants. They later carried out house raids, often resulting in arbitrary arrests and killings.

During these raids, agents used AKM rifles to fire on unarmed protesters and residents, turning residential areas into war zones. SERNIC also employed civilian vehicles to enter neighborhoods and hunt down young individuals, spreading fear among communities. Witnesses reported indis-

criminate shootings and nighttime chases. These actions, documented by the CDD, constitute a state-sponsored terror policy. The use of lethal force, arbitrary pursuits, and extrajudicial killings are severe human rights violations that amount to crimes against humanity.

Most victims in Maputo were young people, some of them minors, killed during deliberate hunting operations conducted by SERNIC. The agency's modus operandi reflects an organized and institutionalized strategy to suppress protests and silence the youth leading the demonstrations against the regime. SERNIC's actions have created an atmosphere of fear and panic in peripheral neighborhoods, forcing many families to flee their homes.



## The legal framework of SERNIC

According to Article 2 of Law No. 2/2017 of January 9, the National Criminal Investigation Service is responsible for conducting criminal investigations within the limits established by the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique and other national laws. This legal framework is designed to ensure that SERNIC operates within legal parameters, respects citizens' rights, and maintains public order.

Article 5 of the same law outlines fundamental

principles for SERNIC's operations, including legality, impartiality, and non-partisanship. These principles ensure that investigations are free from political or partisan influence and uphold human dignity. Among SERNIC's general functions are executing judicial and prosecutorial directives, preventing and investigating crimes, and conducting surveillance of suspected criminal activities. It also centralizes criminal intelligence analysis and provides technical support to other investigative bodies.

## SERNIC's actions during protests violate its mandate

The law governing SERNIC does not authorize its involvement in repressing public demonstrations, particularly through the use of firearms. SERNIC's mandate is limited to criminal investigation and prevention activities that respect legality and citizens' rights. Therefore, SERNIC's participation in repressive actions against public demonstrations, as seen during protests in Maputo since October 21, 2024, constitutes a clear violation of its legal mandate. Such actions de-

mand legal and disciplinary consequences for those involved.

SERNIC's interventions should be strictly confined to its legal scope, which includes monitoring individuals and situations to prevent crimes and conducting investigations to clarify criminal acts. Any actions outside this scope, especially repressive measures against public demonstrations, undermine its credibility as a criminal investigation and prevention body.

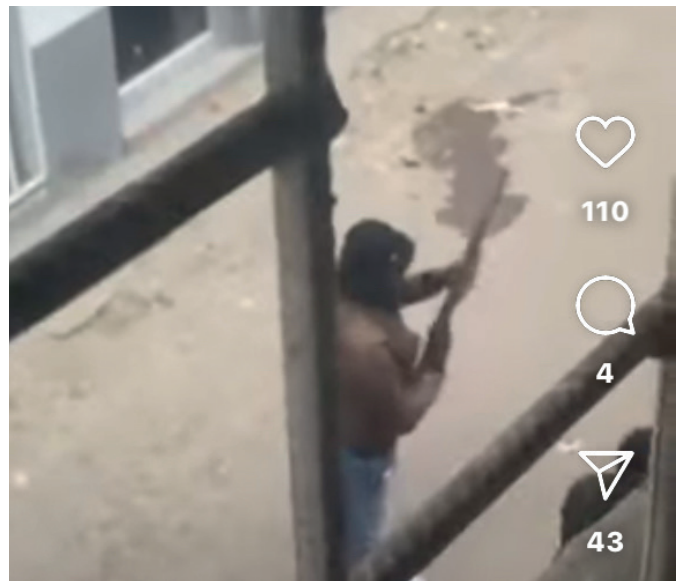
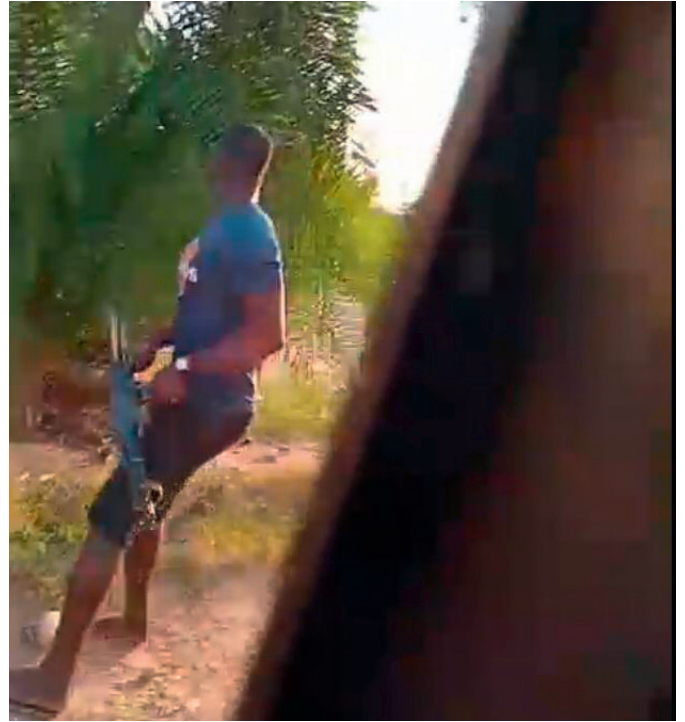
## International accountability demanded

Given SERNIC's illegal actions, including the killings of civilians during protests, the CDD calls for an independent international investigation into its involvement in these crimes. Mozambican authorities must be held accountable for the abuses committed. Additionally, SERNIC's violent and clandestine operations should be immediately halted under the supervision of national and international observers.

Communities affected, particularly in Maputo's

marginalized neighborhoods, require immediate guarantees of security and protection from SERNIC's actions. The agency cannot continue operating as an instrument of violent repression and impunity. The evidence presented by CDD makes it clear that these actions are part of a state-sponsored terror strategy against its own population. Mozambique faces an unprecedented crisis, and both national and international communities must not remain silent in the face of these crimes.





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