

Ângela Leão denies all accusations, asks to be questioned about the “hidden debts” and not about her houses

- In her hearing, she said she is being persecuted for being the wife of the former General Director of SISE, and questioned the court where the wives of the leaders who were also involved in designing the project to protect the exclusive economic zone are. She also said that she did not know Privinvest and that she never received money from that business group. Regarding the emails she exchanged with Mabunda about payments from Privinvest, she said she will not talk about documents taken from a computer that is not hers, as she suspects that they may have been forged by the Public Prosecutor's.



Ângela Leão

- Although she said she has never been involved in the exclusive economic zone protection project, she requested to be asked questions related to the “hidden debts” not about her properties. She denied having paid for the properties she bought and built with money from the Privinvest group and said that she would not like to talk about the houses in court as it was a private matter. She also took the opportunity to apologise to the defendants Sidónio Siteo and Crimildo Manjate who, in her view, are innocent and were only arrested because they did business with her
- When questioned about the origin of the more than 387 million meticaís that she said she handed over to Fabião Mabunda for him to manage and use in her works, Ângela Leão said that as a businesswoman in various branches for many years it is natural for her to handle those amounts. The Public Prosecutor repeated that 387 million meticaís was a lot of money, the defendant said it was relative. The hearing of the Ângela Leão will resume today with the defence asking questions

In an orange suit, Ângela Leão, 44, Gregório Leão’s wife, at the time of the facts General Director of the State Security and Intelligence Service (SISE), responded yesterday to questions from the court, the Public Prosecutor and the Mozambique Bar Association (OAM), an assistant to the case, all of them related to her involvement in the financial scandal of the “hidden debts”. The only woman who remains in custody as part of Case No. 18/2019-C, Ângela Leão is pointed out by the Public Prosecutor as being the person who was in charge of the negotiations and management of more than 387 million meticaís paid in her and her husband’s interest by the Privinvest group and Txopela Investments, through M Moçambique Construções, Fabião Mabunda’s company.

The money was paid as a bribe to the former SISE General Director for his role in designing the projects of the ProIndicus, EMATUM and MAM companies, as well as making them viable by requesting State guarantees to obtain financing credits. But Ângela Leão said she has never had any connection with Privinvest and that she did not receive money transferred by that business group. In essence, the defendant repeated Fabião Mabunda’s narrative.

Ângela Leão said that she has no relationship with the Privinvest group and that the first time she heard about the company was in the press. And the judge questioned: “If you did not know the Privinvest group, how do you explain the fact that on 12 May 2014, the day before Fabião Mabunda received USD 1,700,000 from Privinvest, you sent an email with the subject “Confirm”, attaching a bordereaux proving the transfer that came to reflect in Mabunda’s account the next day, 13 May 2014?” The defendant denied sending the email and, when invited to view it, she refused. “Did you open Mabunda’s computer in front of him? How are we going to get the veracity of those documents?



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These documents have been vitiated,” she accused.

The Public Prosecutor also confronted the defendant with emails exchanged with Fabião Mabunda. The Public Prosecutor quoted the 27 March 2014 email sent to her by Fabião Mabunda with the following information: “In the attached invoice, USD1,925,000 remains unpaid. She sent an email with the following content: “I didn’t understand, Mabunda. I wanted an invoice for the amount of one, how have we been doing?” The next day, 28 March 2014, Fabião Mabunda emailed invoice number 73, referring to the payment of USD 2,000,000, issued by M Moçambique Construções Lda to Privinvest Shipbuilding. Ângela Leão again questioned the authenticity of the emails and said she refused to answer about everything that was extracted from Mabunda’s computer.

When asked a question related to her husband, the defendant became emotional: “I am in prison because of my husband and that makes me emotional. I am

here because I am the wife of the former SISE General Director. Why does the life of the Leãos have to be made public?” The judge, in his calm manner, warned the defendant: “You are not here just because you are Mr Gregório Leão’s wife. You are here because of the crimes the Public Prosecutor is charging you with and you have been indicted of by the court. But Ângela Leão reacted: “Where are the wives of those who were involved in the design of the project? Don’t you judge think it’s strange that they’re not here”?

Ângela Leão went so far as to ask the court why she is never questioned about the undeclared debts. “When I was called to the Attorney General Office before I was arrested, I was told that they wanted to hear me about the undeclared debts. But they never asked me about that. They always want to know about my properties.” And the judge reacted immediately: “These debts have many names, but the defendant is really talking about the debts here. We’re not talking about any-

thing else. We want to know whether or not that money from the debts was used to buy your houses. It's for certainty and not doubt. The question here is whether or not your houses were bought with the money from the hidden debts." And the defendant insisted: "I am not among the people who contracted the debts. Where are these people?"

To the question why her properties were paid for with the money transferred from the Prinvest group to M Moçambique Construções, the defendant replied: "My houses were paid for with my money, my money, and not with the Prinvest group's money". The Prosecutor asked whether the defendant had any way of proving it. "I have no way to prove it because I am in prison. I used to give money to Mabunda to make payments. Even when I didn't have money, I would go after it and get it, even if I had to borrow it. But right now I have no documents". Asked how much cash she handed over to Mabunda to pay for the Costa do Sol property that cost USD 900,000, she said she did not want to answer.

She confirmed that she bought two detached houses in Ponta D'Ouro, but said they were not paid for with Prinvest group money. "I paid them with my own money and Prinvest cannot come into my relationship with the houses and with Mabunda". The two houses cost USD 300,000 each, but the defendant declined to talk about the prices. "It was in cash, but I will not answer whether it was in meticaís or dollars". Faced with her email with the following content: "Dear Mabunda, I request the following transfer: 12,950,000 meticaís to Sidónio Siteo", Ângela Leão reacted as follows: "If you have taken it from Mabunda's computer, I will not respond". The money was to pay for the pur-



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chase of the houses. It is said that the money from the rents from the houses in Ponta D'Ouro was channelled into a company called Leão Investments South Africa. When asked whether she or her husband owned the company, she said she did not want to answer.

And because in the preliminary instruction she said she used the bank credit of 93 million meticaís granted by the BCI bank to pay the costs of the houses, the Public Prosecutor reminded her that the financing was in 2015, after she started acquiring properties. What's more, she transferred only 20 million meticaís to her manager and contractor Fabião Mabunda, with another amount being transferred to family members. Ângela Leão confirmed

transfers to family members, but she said that her brothers were her collaborators and were involved in her works.

At his hearing, Mabunda said that he used more than 387 million meticaís received from Prinvest in the Ângela Leão interest and the cash he had received from her to return it to that business group. The Public Prosecutor asked him what the provenance of so much money was. "The much is relative. And, that money was not paid in a single year. I started working with Fabião Mabunda in 2012 and it was not only to him that I paid money. I am an entrepreneur in several areas before I married Gregório, it is natural to have had that amount or much more. I still handle these amounts, even being in prison."

The defendant apologizes to defendants who were detained "only" because they had a business relationship with her

Ângela Leão confirmed that she knew the defendant Cipriano Mutota, a SISE officer and partner in the company MULEPE. She joined MULEPE's shareholder structure in 2013, when her cousin Benjamin Buque Gonçalves gave up his stake in the company. When asked whether she knew that Benjamin Buque Gonçalves represented Gregório Leão's interests in MULEPE, Ângela Leão replied in the negative. She also confirmed that she knew Leonardo Pene, another MULEPE partner, but as her husband's colleague at SISE. She said that she did not know Jean Boustani, or Txopela Investments, a company that allegedly transferred money from the Prinvest

group to M Moçambique Construções, in her interest. In fact, when asked whether she had received any money from Txopela Investments, she did not answer it.

When asked if she had information about the protection of the exclusive economic zone project, she said that she learned about it through the press. The Public Prosecutor informed her that during that project conception, MULEPE was indicated as the company that would participate as the mean in the implementation of the project. But, she insisted saying that she never heard of the project from MULEPE. "When I joined MULEPE, Mutota was the executive and had a determining role. We

were still restructuring the company and I didn't have much information about it."

In regard to the defendant António Carlos do Rosário, she said that he was her teacher at the Higher Institute of International Relations (ISRI), and later her husband's colleague, at SISE. But she denied having had a close relationship, nor commercial interests or investments in common with António Carlos do Rosário. The Public Prosecutor's representative confronted her with documents which shows that she, António Carlos do Rosário and Cipriano Mutota were partners in the Jociro International Lda company, to which she said that the company never operated.

To a judge’s question, she said that she met the defendant Teofilo Nhangumele in 2011, at a meeting held by the Organising Committee of the African Games (COJA). She said it was the only time she saw him and that she was not informed about MULEPE sharing offices with the Nhangumele’s company. It is stated in the case that the defendant allegedly informed Cipriano Mutota and Teofilo Nhangumele that she would be the intermediary between them and her husband Gregório Leão in matters relating to the protection of the exclusive economic zone project. On this issue, she said that never raised the matter with the two, as she was not involved in that project. She said, however, that Cipriano Mutota reportedly asked her to get a sealed envelope to her husband, suggesting that it was something that had to do with the project. “I took it to my husband. After opening it, he said he had already seen it and that I should no longer get involved in the matter.”

Regarding the defendant Fabião Mabunda, Angela said she met him in 2012 as a contractor, and hired him to build and manage her works. She knows the company M Moçambique Construções Lda, owned by Fabião Mabunda, and said that her relationship with it was one of contracting. “It was the M Moçambique Construções that built some houses, but I would not like to share this information in this place.” When asked which works were built and managed by him, she refused to answer, claiming that these were personal and private matters.

Although she said that she had signed several contracts with Mabunda related to the construction of houses, she never presented them to the Attorney General’s Office (PGR), since the preparatory inquiry phase. Yesterday she again said that she has no way to present documents because

she and her husband have been detained for almost three (3) years. But the Public Prosecutor reminded her of a notification from the PGR dated December 4, 2018 regarding the need to present the documents, adding that the defendant has had three (3) months to gather documents as she was detained in March 2019. “During that period it was a life of persecution. When a State or Government is persecuting you, it is not easy to have time to think.” But the prosecution reminded her that, strangely, her lawyer was able to gather some documents, “minus the contracts signed with Mr Mabunda and the cash payments evidences”.

Since she said that had made many payments to Fabião Mabunda in cash, the judge asked how much money she paid in total, to which she said that she did not wish to address the issue. She confirmed that she had instructed the defendant Fabião Mabunda to transfer sums of money to the defendant Sidónio Siteo. Asked on the purpose of the money, she said that it was to pay for one of the properties he was purchasing from him. Asked if it is the villa located in the Costa do Sol area, she said that she would not like to talk about her real estate in court. “It is my private life and I would not like to expose that in court.”

Moreover, as part of the amount received from the Privinvest group was used to buy houses, the questions on the subject were unavoidable. The defendant confirmed having bought real estate from Sidónio Siteo, but said she would not like to specify how many. The case states that Fabião Mabunda transferred to Sidónio Siteo about 29 million meticaís of the money transferred to M Moçambique Construções by the Privinvest group. He later passed the amount on to Ângela Leão in

small instalments. When asked to explain herself, the defendant said: “He sold me a house and later changed his mind, saying he wanted to live in it. As he wanted to give me a smaller house in exchange, we negotiated a new price and he had to pay me back the difference”. Asked whether she had signed sale and purchase or building contracts for the houses bought from the defendant Sidónio Siteo, she said she had signed some.

She took the opportunity of her hearing to apologize to the defendants that she considers them innocent but that were arrested only because they did business with her. “I would like to apologize to Sidónio Siteo and his family, as he was detained for selling me real estate. Of the 19 defendants in this case, eight were detained only because they had dealings with me.” She also apologized to the defendant Crimildo Manjate, who described him as a businessman who supplied and fitted aluminium at her works. “He is another person who was innocently arrested, only because he sold me a ruin. I take this opportunity to apologize to him and his family. He has done absolutely nothing.”

She confirmed owning the 10-house project in the Costa do Sol area and said that the works are not yet finished. Part of the construction work was carried out by Fabião Mabunda. The project was budgeted at 65 million meticaís, but she said she could not remember the amounts. “The condominium project belonged to her sister Mbanda, but then we negotiated and I became part of the partnership. She came in with space and I mobilized funding for its construction, but the works were not finished.” She also confirmed having instructed Fabião Mabunda to transfer more than 12 million meticaís to her sister Mbanda, but did not say for what purpose.



EDITORIAL INFORMATION

Property: CDD – Centro para Democracia e Desenvolvimento
Director: Prof. Adriano Nuvunga
Editor: Emídio Beula
Author: Emídio Beula
Team: Emídio Beula, Ilídio Nhantumbo, Isabel Macamo, Julião Matsinhe, and Ligia Nkavando.
Layout: CDD

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

 CDD_moz
E-mail: info@cddmoz.org
Website: http://www.cddmoz.org

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