

DAY 14 OF THE "HIDDEN DEBT" SCANDAL TRIAL

Mabunda says that he has no regrets and sees no need to return the money

- On the second day of his hearing, the "front man" of Gregório Leão and his wife Ângela Leão insisted on his narrative of conceal the relationship between the more than 387 million meticaís that he received from the Privinvest group with the former General Director of SISE. He said he earned 0.4% of the amount and sees no need to return that money to the Mozambican people. "I received the money from Privinvest. Whether it is from the Mozambican people, it is not up to me".



Fabião Mabunda

- Today, Wednesday, is a “day off” and the biggest financial scandal trial in the history of Mozambique will resume tomorrow with the hearing of the defendant Ângela Leão, the person who was in the front line in the management of the bribe paid to the former SISE’s General Director by the Prinvest group. Ângela Leão is the only woman still in detention as part of the “hidden debts” case.

After answering to over 140 questions asked to him by the Public Prosecutor on Monday, Mabunda returned to the court yesterday to be questioned by the Mozambican Bar Association (OAM), the assistant to the case, and by the defence. Because the previous day had been long and tedious - the session ended at midnight - yesterday, the defendant was a man of few words, and was not in the mood for long or explanatory answers. To OAM’s questions, he would answer as follows: “I will not answer that question”; “I already answered that question yesterday”. When OAM lawyer Vicente Manjate asked him to repeat some of the answers he gave at Monday’s session, Fabião Mabunda shoot back: “The answer is recorded in the minutes, Doctor”.

He showed the same behaviour when OAM wanted to confront him with some documents in the case file: “You don’t need to show them to me, Doctor. I don’t want to see any documents today”. And there was no way of forcing him to read the documents. But Judge Efigénio Baptista drew his attention to the need to avoid giving generic answers. “You have the right not to read documents, but you shouldn’t say that today I don’t want to see documents. You should give answers according to the questions that are asked to you,” the judge explained.

Before the beginning of the millionaire transfers from the Prinvest group and Txopela Investments, Fabião Mabunda’s company (M Moçambique Construções Lda) had only 1,000 meticaís. However, between 28 August 2013 and 3 June 2014, the company received more than 387 million meticaís from the Prinvest group. The Public Prosecutor has no doubt that the recipient of the money was the State Security and Intelligence Service (SISE) former General Director, Gregório Leão and his wife Ângela Leão, but Fabião Mabunda insists in an unconvincing narra-

tive to deny even evident facts. In fact, the defendant insists that he received the money from the Prinvest group, converting it into dollars and returned it to the owners in cash.

Alexandre Chivale, lawyer for Ndambi Guebuza and Ines Moiane’s lawyer, asked the defendant why he did not return the Prinvest’s money in the same way, since he knew that the contract project he signed with that business group would not be implemented. Mabunda said he had already answered the question. And when asked what he earned from receiving millions of meticaís transferred by the Prinvest group, withdrawing it, converting it into dollars and then returning it to the source, he replied that he earned 0.4% of the more than 387 million meticaís that passed through M Moçambique Construções Lda’s accounts.

Fawzy Bachir was the name Fabião Mabunda most often mentioned during the two days of his questioning. He described him as the Prinvest group project manager, and the person with whom he signed the subcontract to build the exclusive economic zone project infrastructure, and with whom he communicated. Fawzy Bachir is the one who informed him about the transfer of money from the Prinvest group to M Moçambique Construções Lda; He was the one with whom he discussed ways of justifying the receipt of the money at the bank; He is the one who informed him of the change of plans on the use of the money transferred to his company and instructed him to withdraw the money, convert it into dollars, and hand it over to him. After hearing so many times of the same name, lawyer Alexandre Chivale requested the court to issue an order to the Prinvest group to find out whether or not they have an employee named Fawzy Bachir.

In his attempt to rule out any connection between the money he received from the Prinvest group and the Leãos, defendant

Fabião Mabunda said that in his capacity as the family’s contractor, he kept a lot of cash he received from defendant Angela Leão. He said that in total he received more than 100 million meticaís to pay the expenses of the works he was doing for the Leãos, but also to make payments ordered by the defendant Ângela Leão. The defence questioned him in what capacity he kept her money and what he earned from doing that: “I kept the money because I did many works for her. My pay was in the Mrs Angela Leão’s works I kept doing”.

When asked if he had any relationship with Gregório Leão, he replied that he had never spoken to him before his arrest in the Língamo prison facility in Matola. “He never appeared in the businesses I did with Ângela Leão”. However, it is stated in the process and he himself confirmed yesterday that, through his company, M Moçambique Construções Lda, he carried out maintenance works at the Academia de Altos Estudos Estratégicos (AAEE) (Academy of Advanced Strategic Studies), an institution located in Maluana, Manhiça District, Maputo Province in charge of training SISE agents. In 2016, when he carried out such maintenance works at the academy, Gregório Leão was the General Director of SISE.

Yesterday, the Mozambique Bars Association, the assistant to the case, asked the defendant if regretted getting involved in the project to protect the exclusive economic zone, which gave rise to the “hidden debts”. Fabião Mabunda replied as follows: “Honourable lawyer, I received money from Prinvest and returned it to Prinvest. I am not involved in what you are saying about causing damage to the Mozambican people. All I earned was 0.4% and I don’t see the need to return that money to the Mozambican people. I received the money from Prinvest. Whether it is from the Mozambican people, it is not up to me”.



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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