

DAY LI OF THE "HIDDEN DEBTS" SCANDAL TRIAL

Neusa de Matos says that when she learned she was being investigated she went to the Attorney General' Office to provide clarifications and deliver documents of the sale of her house to the defendant Renato Matusse

- After the hearing of officials from the secret services and the Ministries of National Defence, Finance and Fisheries who participated in the setting up and management of ProIndicus, EMATUM and MAM, and former managers of the Central Bank of Mozambique involved in authorising external funding to the three companies, yesterday the court started the hearing of declarants who have some connection to the facts of which the defendants are accused.



Neusa de Matos

The first declarant was Neusa de Matos, 51 years old, a retired official from the Presidency of the Republic, where she held various positions, especially Advisor for Legal and Constitutional Affairs to Presidents Joaquim Chissano and Armando Guebuza. From 2015 to 2018, she worked as the Head of the Prime Minister's Office and is currently retired.

The declarant recounted that on the evening of 3 April 2017 she learned that a document was circulating on social media indicating that some officials, including her colleagues in the Presidency of the Republic, were being investigated for crimes related to "hidden debts".

"A friend sent the message on *WhatsApp* saying he had received a document and didn't know if he should share it with me. I replied that he could. He resent a PDF file and I saw that it was a letter from the Attorney General's Office (PGR) addressed to commercial banks requesting the lifting of bank secrecy of a list of more than 20 personalities, including mine".

At first, Neusa Matos said she was not concerned about the investigation, but after a few minutes she reread the document and found that not all her colleagues from the Presidency of the Republic had their names on the list. "My deduction that it was a generalized investigation fell apart. And that's when I tried to find the reason that would be connecting me to the matter".

The declarant recalled selling an apartment in 2013 to her former colleague in the Presidency of the Republic, Renato Matusse, whose name was also on the list. "The same night I went to my home office and looked for proof of payment for the house. The first proof I found was a statement from my account domiciled at the Portuguese bank *Caixa Geral de Depósitos*. I also found a *bordereaux* from Millennium Bim that was given to me by my account manager when money was transferred. I was supposed to receive USD 150,000, but they had transferred about USD 300,000."

Believing that the sale of the apartment was the issue that linked her to the "hidden debts" investigations, the declarant went to the Attorney General's Office to provide clarification and requested the *file on the sale* of the apartment to be attached to the case *file*.

Until 2013, she owned an apartment on Julius Nyerere Avenue and, to take advantage of the real estate price boom that began in 2010, she decided to sell the property. The real estate agent in charge of selling the property got a buyer willing to pay USD 450,000 net. "I said I accepted the offer and only later the intermediary told me that the interested party was Renato Matusse, my colleague from the Presidency of the Republic. So it was not me who told Renato Matusse that I was selling the house. He found out



through a real estate agent. I have never discussed private matters with colleagues from the Presidency".

After learning that his colleague was the buyer of the property, he began to deal with him directly. It was in one of these conversations that Renato Matusse informed the declarant that he had outstanding royalties from Macmillan. "He asked me if I had a bank account abroad and if I could make it avail-

able for the purpose of paying the purchase price of the property. I said I preferred to receive the money in Mozambique because I wanted to use the amount for the purchase of a house. Since he insisted, we agreed that he could pay USD 300,000 in Mozambique and he could transfer the remaining USD 150,000 to my account at *Caixa Geral de Depósitos* in Portugal."

Meanwhile, an amount equivalent to 300

thousand dollars was transferred to the account in Portugal, in two tranches, the first in August and the second in September 2013. To the account domiciled at Millennium Bim, in Maputo, about USD 300,000 were also transferred. The declarant said she was alerted by her account manager at *Caixa Geral de Depósitos* that an amount equivalent to USD 300,000 had been credited to her account, rather than USD 150,000, as was planned.

Neusa de Matos told the court that she informed her colleague Renato Matusse that an extra amount had been transferred to her account in Portugal, to which he asked the declarant to wait three days, with the promise that he would inform her on how she should proceed. After this period, Matusse asked the declarant to write him a check for the amount corresponding to the difference, that is, 150 thousand dollars.

"I didn't have any cheques, so I went to the counter to request a counter check. After explaining what was happening, the manager proposed that instead of spending money on a counter check, I could make a direct transfer, since Renato Matusse had a dollar account at the same bank, also managed by her".

To prove that she had no control over Renato Matusse bank details, the declarant said that the documents supporting the transfer were filled by the manager, supposedly because she was the one who had all the data of the buyer. "I just signed the transfer document and went to deliver it to Renato Matusse as proof of the return of the amount he had overpaid. He reacted in a surprised and displeased manner, questioning me how I had gained access to his account".

The declarant said she always believed that the transfers of amounts to her accounts in

Mozambique and Portugal had been made by the publisher Macmillan, but after learning of the investigation at the Attorney General's Office she realised that the money came from the Privinvest group and the payments had been ordered by a US bank.

In the act of selling the apartment, the declarant passed an irrevocable power of attorney granting full powers to Renato Matusse. "He said he did not have time for bureaucracy, and he was buying the house for his son who was getting married and, in due course, he would be the one to deal with the property transfer process". However, on the day the declarant went to deliver the keys, the buyer presented her with a gentleman by the name of Fanuel as the new owner of the property. "I didn't understand anything, because the information I had was that he was buying the house for his son".

In Guebuza's second term there was a small group of officials who had access to information and travelled with the Head of State

Neusa de Matos said that she only heard about the "hidden debts" when she was already working as the Prime Minister's Cabinet Chief. Asked if after learning that she was being investigated she contacted Renato Matusse for an explanation, she said that on 5 April 2017 she sent a message to her former colleague asking why he had involved her in that situation. Renato Matusse responded with a short message in which he regretted what was happening and called on the declarant to remain calm. Further conversations via telephone messages followed.

She was very angry with the attitude of her former colleague, whom she accuses of having ruined her career. "When this problem started, I asked to stop working at the Prime Minister's Office and then I asked to retire. I got an offer of a well-paid job in the private sector, but the day I was about to sign the contract I got a call from the general director informing me that they could not hire a person who is involved in the hidden debts."

Despite having worked as Advisor for Legal and Constitutional Affairs to the President of the Republic, Neusa de Matos did not know about the contracting of the projects of the three companies, much less their loans totalling two billion dollars. She said that after Armando Guebuza's second term in office, it was decided that information should go through a restricted group of officials, namely the General Affairs Advisor, Carlos Pessane,



the Political Affairs Advisor, Renato Matusse, and the Private Secretary of the President of the Republic, Maria Inês Moiane.

They were only informed if it was necessary for other advisors to participate. "That was the perception I had and that is what happened in practice. It was that small group that participated in the Head of State's hearings and in domestic and international journeys. I and other colleagues allegedly did not travel be-

cause there was a need for cost containment."

The declarant recalled that Renato Matusse even travelled to Dubai, where he stayed for two weeks supposedly dealing with confidential matters, which was not the practice. "I got that information from the administrative staff who handled the journeys. I didn't use to see him at our weekly advisory board meetings and when I sought to know, that was the answer I got."

Elónio Muiane confirms that the defendant Elias Moiane bought the house at the behest of his mother, the defendant Maria Inês Moiane

Elónio Muiane, a teacher at Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM) and owner of two companies - a water resources consulting company and a company dedicated to construction of water supply infrastructure - was the second declarant to be heard. In 2016, Muiane sold his property located in Maputo City to the defendant Elias Moiane for 14 million meticaís paid in two instalments. He confirmed that he met Elias Moiane through a real estate agent by the name of Edmundo.

The payment of the two instalments was made through bank transfers, and the declarant used the 14 million meticaís to rent the property where he lived and to build the house where he currently lives, in Mulotane, Boane district, Maputo province. He said he never sought to know the origin of the money, that is, the person who had actually made the payment. "My assumption was that it was his mother who had paid for the property, since Elias Moiane had said so."

To a question from the court, the declarant replied that when the Elias Moiane came to his house with the intention of buying the property, he said he had been mandated by his mother since she did not have time. "We went to the notary to formalize the contract of purchase and sale of the property. I no longer remember the name we put on the irrevocable power of attorney. Whether it was his or his mother's one".

The irrevocable power of attorney attached to the case file is by the name of Elias Moiane. "I depended on what the client wanted. Since he had paid for the property, there was no reason for me to question it.



Elónio Muiane

After granting an irrevocable power of attorney, Elónio Muiane disconnected himself from the matter and kept no contact with Elias Moiane, until 2018 when he was notified to be heard at the Attorney General' Office. After his hearing, the declarant sought for Elias Moiane because he wanted to get a document to present to the Attorney General' Office.

Asked by the Public Prosecutor if he knew the defendant Maria Inês Dove, the declar-

ant replied in the negative, reiterating that the only person he knew during the process of buying and selling the house is the Elias Moiane. Elónio Muiane admitted that Elias Moiane did not exhibit any power of attorney issued by his mother (Maria Inês Dove) granting him powers to negotiate and buy the property, and he (Elónio Muiane) did not demand it. "The people who introduced me to Mr Elias Moiane were trustworthy, so I didn't doubt anything".



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