



POLICE KILL TWO PEOPLE IN A PROTEST IN MOLUMBO

CDD condemns shooting murder and demands criminal accountability of the officers involved and resignation of the respective commanders

The Police of the Republic of Mozambique (PRM) shot dead two people participating in a protest against the ban on the use of the Malawian Kwacha currency in commercial transactions in the administrative post of Coromana, district of Molumbo, Zambezia province. Besides causing two deaths, the PRM shots seriously injured a third victim who was taken to Milange District Hospital.





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According to *Jornal Notícias*, the population of Coromana, near the border with Malawi, uses more Kwacha than Metical in trade, a reality that dates back to the 1990s. And if this happens it is because there are more than enough reasons that lead people to prefer the use of one currency over the other. This does not constitute a crime. It is not a crime to use convertible foreign currency in the Mozambican market.

In fact, in several Mozambican villages located near the borders, it is common to use foreign currency in trade. To use administrative measures and/or police force to limit the use of foreign currency in a border area makes absolutely no sense.

Worse than this is the criminal actions of the PRM whenever it is called upon to restore public order and tranquility. The fact that the protesters in Coromana set up barricades on the roads and set fires in no way justifies the use of lead bullets by PRM agents. There are several ways to contain popular anger and disperse unarmed protesters, such as using rubber bullets, dogs, and water jets.

Firing real bullets at unarmed protesters is condemnable on all levels. The police action in Coromana represents a flagrant violation of human rights, including the right to life. Those responsible for the barbaric murder of two citizens must be held criminally responsible, and the state must be called upon to assume civil responsibility by paying due compensation to the bereaved families.

It is serious when the crimes of murdering civilians are committed by state agents who have the responsibility to protect citizens and to guarantee the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique and other laws, including the right to protest.

In addition to the criminal accountability of the agents involved on it- which is up to the institutions of justice administration, the CDD requires the General Commander of the PRM to dismiss the commander of the police station of Coromana, the commander of the police in the district of Molumbo and the commander of the police in Zambezia province. The three (3) commanders were unable to protect human life by allowing



Aquilasse Kapangula, provincial commander of the Police of the Republic of Mozambique in Zambézia

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their subordinates to fire lead bullets at the protesters.

By dismissing the three commanders, Bernardino Rafael would be being consistent with himself: Last month, he dismissed the police commanders of the administrative post of Xinavane, Manhiça district and Maputo province for failing to contain the anger of the workers of the Xinavane Sugar Factory who were demanding the release of their colleagues who had been arrested by the authorities.

During the protest, the workers vandalized and set fire to the homes of the managers of the Xinavane Sugar Company, the house of the head of the administrative post of Xinavane, the local police station, and burned three vehicles. In reaction, the General Commander of the PRM resigned the entire command chain allegedly

because he was unable to control the protesters.

This time the situation is even more serious: two lives were brutally interrupted due to the disproportionate use of force by the police. Therefore, the CDD argues that in addition to criminal accountability of the officers involved, the entire chain of command should be resigned because it was unable to prevent its men from taking the lives of unarmed civilians.

The shooting murder of two people who were protesting against the decisions of the local authorities to limit the use of the Malawian currency (Kwacha) in trade confirms, once again, that the Mozambican state is authoritarian and uses its repressive apparatus to close the civic space. In a rule of law and democracy it is inconceivable to use weapons of war to control civilians who protest against government decisions.



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