

KaTembe trial reveals how money of ex-miners now living in misery was spent

●The trial being held at KaTembe, on the other side of Maputo Bay, continues to reveal how the money of thousands of Mozambican workers in the South African mines was used to feed the whims of the leaders of the Ministry of Labour, at the time led by Helena Taipo.



Defendant Helena Taipo, at time of the facts Minister of Labour

The revelations take place far from the scrutiny of the legitimate owners of the embezzled money, namely the active and retired Mozambican miners, including widows and relatives of the deceased. All because Judge Evandra Uamusse decided to prohibit the capture of images

and the live broadcast of the sessions of the trial of Case No. 51/2019/10, relating to the embezzlement of 113 million meticaís from the Migratory Labour Directorate, in the years 2013 and 2014.

The scandalous revelations were made by the defendant José Monjane, at the time

of the facts Head of the Finance Division of the Migratory Labour Directorate. For example, he confirmed transfers of just over one million meticaís for the purchase of baskets for the end of the year (2013 and 2014) in two supermarkets in Maputo City. Almost 85% of the transfers for the purchase of the

gifts were approved by the former Minister of Labour, Helena Taipo.

In addition to the gifts bought with the money of Mozambican miners, José Monjane also confirmed the withdrawal, through cheques, of about 10 million meticaís from the working capital account of the Migratory Labour Directorate. The money was withdrawn in several tranches under the allegation that it was intended to advance deferred payments and to pay for the social rehabilitation of former miners and their dependents. But the defendant José Monjane himself did not provide evidence that that money reached the legitimate beneficiaries.

The indicted also confirmed the transfer of 3.7 million meticaís from the Migratory Labour Directorate to the company Dona Tina Artes de Decorações de Interiores, relating to the supply of furniture and curtains to the Miner's Office. The company that benefited from the 3,7 million meticaís contract is owned by Argentina Taimo, wife of Pedro Taimo, who was in charge of the Miner's Office at the time of the facts. The money from Mozambican miners was also used to buy 50 bicycles in the city of Quelimane, without any contract for the supply of goods.

While the looting continued in the Migratory Labour Department, thousands of former workers of the South African mines and widows of miners fought a real battle to receive the retirement money to which they are entitled. And one of the examples are the former miners who live in the border town of Ressano Garcia, Moamba District, Maputo Province. They are Mozambicans who worked in the South African mines for 20, 30 and 40 years, and they have discoun-



ted part of their salaries for their retirement. However, they are not benefiting from this money.

The "Núcleo de Ex-Mineiros e Viúvas de Ex-Mineiros de Ressano Garcia" says that it was in 2008 that its members started legal proceedings with the Ministry of Labour to benefit from the money they had discounted during the decades they had worked in the South African mines. On 25 August 2021, the group had a meeting with a delegation from the Ministry of Labour and Social Security where various issues related to the payment of retirement funds were discussed.

"The Ministry delegation denied all our demands and the Deputy Minister put an end to the meeting which lasted for three hours. The employment contracts we signed were supposed to benefit each of us at

the retirement age. But this is not the case. Many former miners are not receiving their retirement money, many widows whose husbands died in the mines of South Africa are not receiving their retirement money," said a letter from the "Núcleo de Ex-Mineiros e Viúvas de Ex-Mineiros de Ressano Garcia".


Since August 2018, the Miner's Care Office, a unit that was supposed to address the concerns of former South African mine workers, has been operating in Ressano Garcia. "We were invited to the opening ceremony of the Miner's Office, but to our astonishment we were not given the floor. The former minister, already saying goodbye, introduced us to the head of the Office, named Hermelinda Tamele, as the person who would help us address our concerns. Unfortunately, she is no longer here and the Office is not functioning regularly".



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