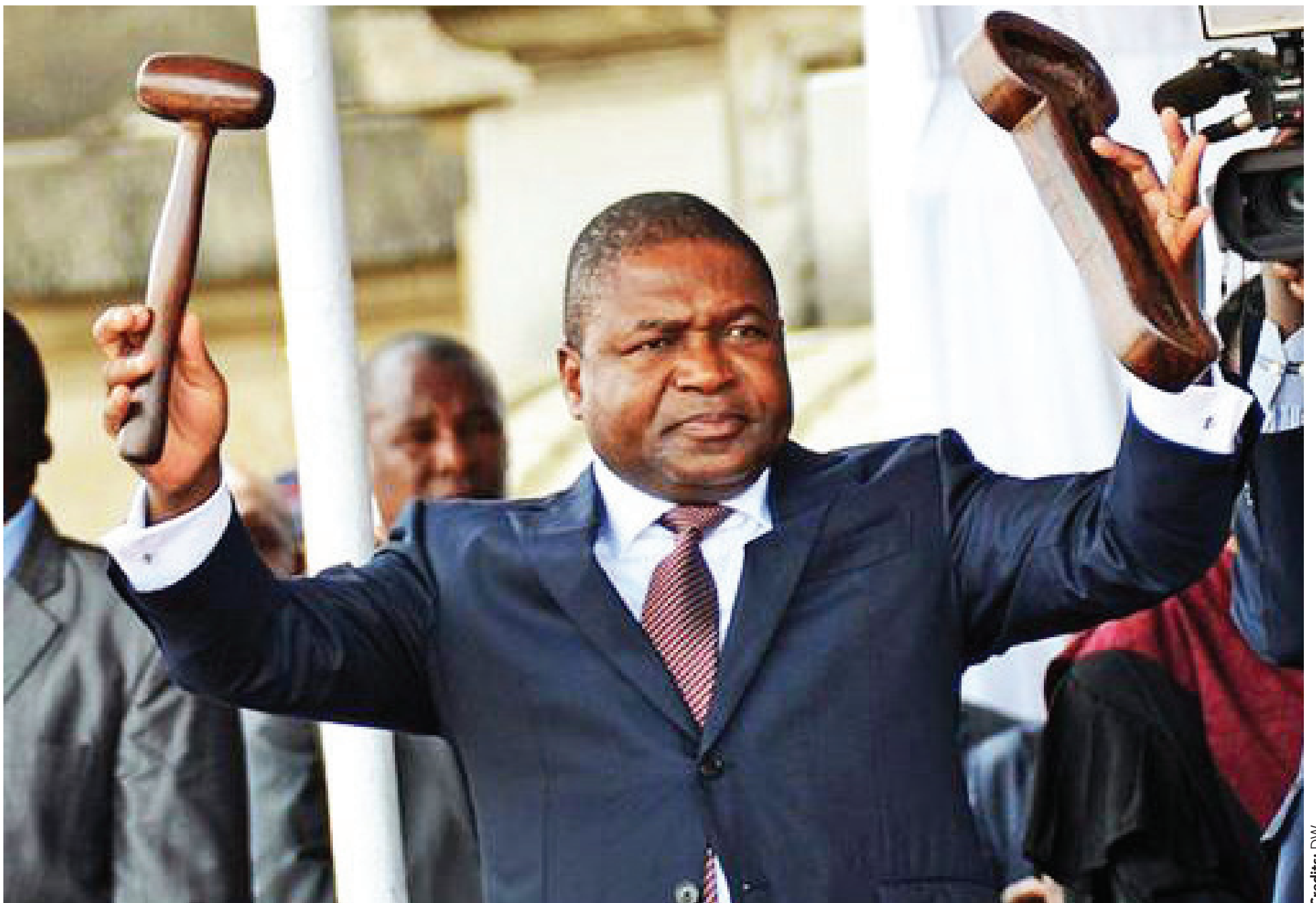


NO TO THE THIRD TERM!

The President of the Republic must break his silence and make a statement on the rumors of the third term

● With the introduction of political pluralism in Mozambique through the 1990 Constitution of the Republic, the holding of regular elections (presidential, legislative, provincial, and municipal) and the respect for term limits have been the main milestones of the country's democratization process.



Since the first legislative and presidential elections in 1994, municipal elections in 1998, and provincial elections in 2009, Mozambique has respected the terms of office established in the Constitution by holding periodic elections every five years. In fact, article 135.1 of the Constitution of the Republic states that “universal, direct, equal, secret, personal and periodic suffrage constitutes the general rule for the designation of the President of the Republic, the deputies of the Assembly of the Republic, the members of the Provincial Assemblies, the Province Governors, the members of the District Assemblies, the District Administrators, the members of the Municipal Assemblies, and the Mayors of the Municipal Councils.

In parallel, the elected Presidents have complied with the limitation on the number of office terms established in article 146, number 4 of the Constitution: “The President of the Republic can only be reelected once. In other words, after serving a five-year term, he/she can only run for reelection once. Article 146.5 makes room for a President of the Republic who has served two consecutive terms (equivalent to 10 consecutive years in the Presidency of the Republic) to run again, but this can only happen five years after the last term.

Both Joaquim Chissano (1995 - 2005) and Armando Guebuza (2005 - 2015) complied with the rule of two terms in the Presidency of the Republic. It is true that in the last years of their rule there were rumors that both were interested in a third term. But in both cases there was no clear assumption of that claim, much less attempts to change the Constitution to accommodate a third term.

In relation to Filipe Nyusi, whose second and final term ends in 2024, allegations are also circulating that he would be interested in remaining in the Presidency of the Republic for another five years. That is, until 2030. It is not clear what method would be used for his maintenance in power: whether it would be through the revision of the Constitution to allow three presidential terms or it would be through extra-constitutional ways, which is less likely. Within the party, the essay on the third term began to take shape from May 2021, when in the middle of the session of the Frelimo Central Committee a member suggested revising the Constitution to make it feasible to keep Nyusi in power until 2030¹.

Later, the debate reached the social networks by the hands of campaigners at the service of Filipe Nyusi’s consulate, and quickly began to fill the pages of newspapers. Within the current Frelimo party, marked



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by undeniable internal friction, there seems to be a lot of support for the idea of a third term for Filipe Nyusi. So far, no historical or politically influential member of the party has appeared to associate his name with the idea of a third term, which shows weak internal support. The main argument used by supporters of a third term is the expressive victory in the 2019 elections: Nyusi was reelected with 73% of the vote, against 21% for Ossufo Momade (from Renamo) and 4% for Daviz Simando (from MDM). But two notes need to be highlighted here: (1) just like the other elections, the 2019 presidential were not considered fair and transparent by independent observers; (2) the Frelimo candidate was competing for re-election against Ossufo Momade, a first-time candidate without the charisma and popularity of Afonso Dhlakama, the historic Renamo leader who died on May 3, 2018.

Another argument used to justify a third term is the fact that Nyusi’s governance has been marked by several setbacks, including the cutting of direct support to the State Budget following the discovery of the “hidden debts” scandal; devastating cyclones, such as Idai and Ana in the center and Kenneth and Gombe in northern Mozambique; the COVID-19 pandemic and violent extremism in Cabo Delgado.

What the defenders of this argument do not

realize or pretend not to realize is that these setbacks have helped to reveal the true profile of the current President of the Republic: a President who is not up to the challenges of the country; a President who does not have a political vision for Mozambique. In other words, a President who under no circumstances should be proposed to continue in power for another term.

But more worrying than the essays about a third term, is the silence of the President of the Republic. Since these allegations began, Filipe Nyusi has never spoken about them. He never came to the public to assume his intention to remain in power until 2030 or to distance himself from the rumors, reaffirming his respect for democratic principles and his predisposition to follow the examples of Joaquim Chissano and Armando Guebuza.

Filipe Nyusi’s silence is all the more worrisome because of his closeness to Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda since 2000, and Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda since 1986. Paul Kagame and Yoweri Museveni are authoritarian leaders who have invested in oppressive regimes in their respective countries and have resorted to amending constitutional texts to ensure they remain in power. The CDD argues that the President of the Republic should make a public statement on the allegations that he is interested in staying in power until 2030.

¹ <https://evidencias.co.mz/2021/05/26/frelimo-ensaia-nova-revisao-da-constituicao-para-acomodar-terceiro-mandato/>



EDITORIAL INFORMATION

Property: CDD – Centro para Democracia e Desenvolvimento
Director: Prof. Adriano Nuvunga
Editor: Emídio Beula
Author: Emídio Beula
Team: Emídio Beula, Dimas Sinoa, Américo Maluana
Layout: CDD

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

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

