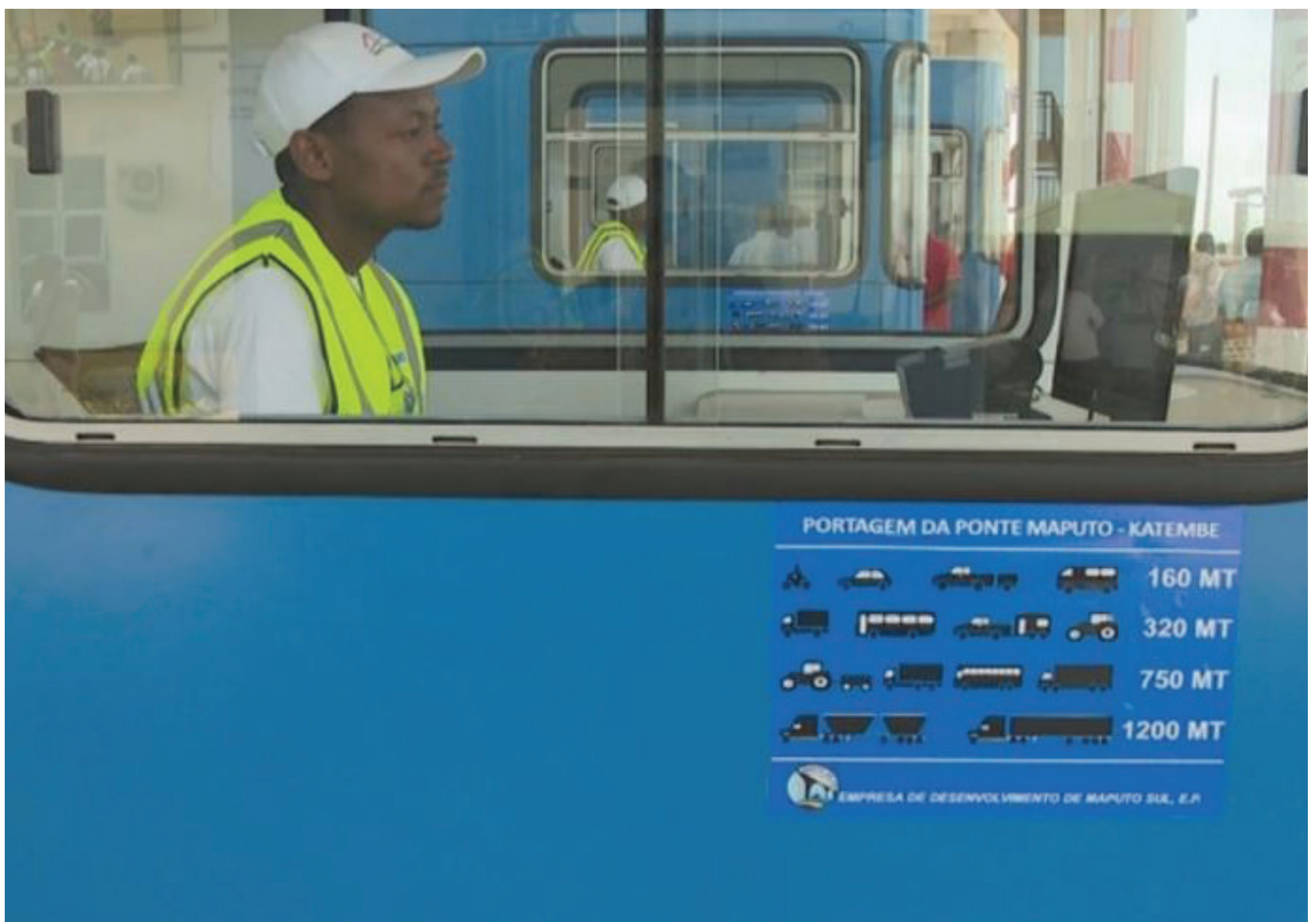


## Reduction of high fees at the Maputo-KaTembe Toll: Government and REVIMO continue in the pact of silence

- Last March, a group of residents of the KaTembe municipal district submitted a petition to REVIMO requesting the reduction of the fees charged on the Maputo - KaTembe Bridge toll, which range from 160 to 1,200 meticaís. Specifically, the residents of KaTembe are asking REVIMO to reduce the fee for light vehicles from 160 to 40 meticaís<sup>1</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.opais.co.mz/portagem-maputo-katembe-continua-cara/>



In reaction, the President of the Board of Directors of REVIMO, the concessionaire of the Maputo - KaTembe Bridge, said that work was already underway to reduce the fees charged. Ângelo Lichanga said that the work was being developed in coordination with the Municipality of Maputo and the Central Government and promised that by the end of this semester, REVIMO would send the proposals for reducing the toll charges of the Maputo - KaTembe Bridge to the Council of Ministers for approval <sup>2</sup>.

There are only two weeks left in the semester and still no information about REVIMO's proposals for the reduction of toll fees. Far from being a solution for mobility and urban expansion to the south of the capital, the Maputo - KaTembe Bridge is impoverishing many families. In just one week, excluding Saturday and Sunday, each user who uses a light vehicle needs 1,600 meticaís to make two trips a day. Assuming that the month has an average of 20 working days, the user who uses a light car spends 6.400 meticaís monthly, well above the national minimum wage.

The 1,600 meticaís a user of the Maputo - KaTembe Bridge spends per week (two daily trips over five working days) is the same as the user of the Ring Road spends per month

(two daily trips over 20 working days). The high fees charged on the bridge toll are holding back the development of KaTembe. Three (3) years after the inauguration of the imposing infrastructure, KaTembe remains a district with rural characteristics, sparsely populated, without economic and social infrastructure. Therefore, the reduction of the toll fee from 160 to 40 meticaís is the only solution to give hope back to the residents of KaTembe, to end the social and economic exclusion, to do justice, to attract investments, and consequently, to guarantee people the right to development.

In fact, it was to guarantee the right to development that the former government of Armando Guebuza contracted a debt of 785 million dollars to finance the construction of the largest bridge in Mozambique. The construction of the bridge, including the connecting roads, has always been seen as a solution to the chronic problem of crossing the bay of Maputo. In addition to constant breakdowns and lack of safety, the small boats and ferries that operated in Maputo bay had many limitations, especially on bad weather days.

The construction of the bridge was also intended to enable the urban expansion to the south of the capital, thus responding to

the challenges imposed by demographic pressure. With the exception of Kanyaca Island, KaTembe is the only municipal district in Maputo that still has extensive uninhabited areas. With the announcement of the construction of the bridge, thousands of young people rushed to buy a plot of land in KaTembe and set up their residences.

On the eve of the bridge's inauguration, the government approved the toll fees, which vary between 160 and 1,200 meticaís. In other words, light vehicles pay 160 meticaís for each trip, four (4) times more than those charged by the same concessionary company on the Maputo ring road tolls. At the time, the Government justified that the amount to be paid on the Maputo - KaTembe Bridge toll was calculated taking into account the high maintenance costs of the infrastructure, given its complexity.

More than a facility for mobility and urban expansion, the bridge has become a factor of exclusion, social discrimination and impoverishment of families living in KaTembe. The high taxes exclude the majority of people who cannot afford to pay 320 meticaís per day and are forced to leave their cars on the other side of the bay; the high taxes impoverish families because they have caused a generalized increase in the prices of goods

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.opais.co.mz/portagem-maputo-katembe-continua-cara/>

and services and, consequently, an increase in the cost of living

Most residents of KaTembe are not taking advantage of the advertised discounts because the system adopted requires the user to make dozens of trips per month, paying 160 meticaís each time they cross the bridge. In a single week, excluding the weekend (Saturday and Sunday), each light vehicle user needs to have 1,600 meticaís to make two trips a day. Assuming that the average month has 20 working days, the average car user spends 6.400 meticaís per month, well above the national minimum wage. The 1,600 meticaís a user of the Maputo-KaTembe Bridge spends per week (two trips a day

for five working days) is the same as a user of the Ring Road spends per month (two trips a day for 20 working days).

Similarly to the Ring Road, the Maputo - KaTembe bridge was also built using public debt, and Mozambicans are already paying the debt. It makes no sense for the Government, through REVIMO, to pass all the maintenance costs of that imposing infrastructure on to the pockets of poor citizens. It makes no sense for the government, through REVIMO, to charge the equivalent of 2.5 dollars for each car that crosses the bridge in a country where millions of Mozambicans (over)live on less than a dollar a day. The fee to be paid for each car that crosses the bridge should

be set at 40 meticaís. In doing so, the government will not only be standardizing the toll rates charged in the Maputo metropolitan area, but will also be doing justice for the residents of KaTembe.

By lowering the toll rate from 160 to 40 meticaís, the government will benefit not only the residents of KaTembe, but also REVIMO itself, which will see an increased flow of vehicles on the Maputo - KaTembe Bridge toll road. Due to the high toll fees, many KaTembe residents who cross the bridge daily avoid taking their cars to the service. The traffic circle immediately after the toll has become a parking lot for cars whose owners cannot afford to pay 320 meticaís per day.



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