

Chaos in Maputo: Transporters paralyze activity to demand fare increases and leave thousands of passengers with no alternative

- The Maputo metropolitan area's passenger transporters stopped their activities on Monday as a way to pressure the Government to authorize the increase of transport fares. The situation caught by surprise thousands of people who intended to reach the most varied destinations, mostly to Maputo City.





In the main terminals, the transporters have parked their vehicles and are waiting for the “no objection” from the Government to increase the fares. Meanwhile, thousands of passengers are crowded at the bus stations in the hope of getting transport. Others are walking to their destinations, even without knowing how they will get back to their homes. Many schoolchildren and students have not been able to get to school. The few who made it left in the early hours of the day, before the turmoil began. But many do not know how they will get home.

The government mobilized almost all police units to the main terminals and bus stations in the cities of Maputo and Matola to contain the turmoil. At the Zimpeto terminal on the outskirts of Maputo City, the police

had to use tear gas to spread out the people who were trying to prevent the circulation of private cars.

There is a high risk that the turmoil in the main bus stations will end in the shooting of people, since the police came out with weapons of war. In fact, it is almost common in Mozambique for police to shoot at civilians participating in demonstrations, including peaceful ones¹.

At this moment, the transport fare for distances of 10 kilometers or less costs 12 metical, and for distances longer than 10 kilometers it costs 15 metical. These fares came into effect in January of this year, after pressure exerted by the transporters².

But in the last six months the Government increased fuel prices three times, the last increase was announced last week, on July 2nd.

Gasoline went up from 83.30 to 86.97 metical per liter, diesel went from 78.97 to 87.97 metical per liter. Cooking gas registered the biggest increase, going from 85,53 to 102,2 metical per kilo, vehicular gas went from 40,57 to 43,73 metical per kilo, lighting oil went from 71,48 to 75,58 metical per liter³.

Last May, when the Government announced the second annual increase in fuel prices, passenger transporters in the Greater Maputo metropolitan area threatened to paralyze activities as a way to pressure the authorities to approve new tariffs. At the time, the transporters proposed a three metical increase, i.e., the 12 metical fare would become 15 metical (for distances up to 10 kilometers) and the 15 metical fare would become 18 metical (for distances longer than 10 ki-

¹ <https://cddmoz.org/cdd-condena-assassinato-a-tiro-e-exige-responsabilizacao-criminal-dos-agentes-envolvidos-e-demissao-dos-respectivos-comandantes-2/>

² <https://www.opais.co.mz/aprovado-aumento-do-preco-do-chapa-100-em-maputo/>

³ <https://www.dw.com/pt-002/mo%C3%A7ambique-aumenta-o-pre%C3%A7o-dos-combust%C3%ADveis-g%C3%A1s-de-cozinha-%C3%A9-maior-subida/a-62334892>



lometers)⁴.

Given the already high cost of living, a fare increase in the Greater Maputo metropolitan area will asphyxiate thousands of vulnerable families, and could result in demonstrations and riots. In fact, it is fears of social turmoil that lead the Government not to authorize a transport fare increase in Greater Maputo.

Indeed, the Government has no strategy to alleviate the high cost of living that hurts vulnerable families, which constitute the majority of the Mozambican population. At the 21st ordinary session of the Council of Ministers, which took place last June 21, the Executive appointed the Ministers of Industry and Commerce (Silvino Moreno), Mineral Resources and Energy (Carlos Zacarias) and Transport and Communications (Mateus Magala) to prepare and present clear proposals to contain the high cost of living⁵.

The decision was taken one week after the President of the Republic acknowledged the possibility of the Government resuming the subsidies to the transport of passengers, in response to the complaints of the operators of that sector who feel suffocated by the high costs of fuel.

Thirteen days later, the Government has still not announced a single measure to alleviate the high cost of living that is impoverishing millions of Mozambicans. In fact, instead of announcing measures, the government has announced yet another increase in fuel prices. In reaction, the transporters decided to park their buses, leaving thousands of passengers with no alternative.

⁴ <https://www.opais.co.mz/preco-do-chapa-podera-subir-em-tres-meticais-nos-proximos-dias-em-maputo/>


⁵ <https://www.opais.co.mz/governo-ainda-busca-estrategias-para-controlar-o-alto-custo-de-vida/>



EDITORIAL INFORMATION

Property: CDD – Centro para Democracia e Desenvolvimento
Director: Prof. Adriano Nuvunga
Editor: Emídio Beula
Author: CDD
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

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