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THE LARGEST PRISON BREAK IN MOZAMBIQUE'S HISTORY

Chaos at the Central Prison facilitates the escape of insurgents, drug traffickers, and kidnappers at BO



Introduction

On December 25, 2024, a mass prison break¹ occurred at the Central Prison of Maputo and the Maximum-Security Prison, commonly known as BO, both located in Matola, Maputo Province, in southern Mozambique. The two facilities are separated by a perimeter wall.

A total of 1,534² inmates escaped from both prisons, marking the largest prison break in terms of numbers in the country's history. Authorities confirmed that during operations on the ground, 34 inmates were fatally shot. Days later, reports indicated that just over 322³ inmates had been recaptured.

The escape resulted in significant destruction to key parts of the Central Prison, including systems that stored sensitive prisoner information. This incident raised serious doubts and fueled speculation about the possibility that the escape was facilitated with clear objectives of enabling the release of specific groups of inmates.

Among the escapees were individuals convicted or held in pre-trial detention for involvement in terrorism and violent extremism in Cabo Delgado, kidnappings, and drug trafficking. These inmates

were held in areas under BO's control. The chaos and destruction at the Central Prison appeared to be a cover for the real mission: facilitating⁴ the release of this specific group detained at BO.

Subsequent reports suggest that the organization and execution of this escape involved senior figures in the Mozambican state, pointing to a possible network of complicity at the highest levels of the government and the ruling Frelimo party. Given the gravity of these suspicions and their potential implications for national security and state integrity, a thorough investigation into the events is urgently required.

This preliminary report aims to serve as a starting point for a forensic investigation into what transpired on December 25, 2024, at BO and the Central Prison. For this investigation, interviews were conducted with 39 informants, including inmates, prison guards from the National Penitentiary Service (SERNAP), officers of the Rapid Intervention Unit (UIR—a subunit of the Mozambican Police Force, PRM), healthcare workers at the Maputo Central Hospital (HCM), and residents living near the prisons.

Objective of the Escape Operation

Following the escape, two official versions of events were presented. During a press conference, the General Commander of the Police, Bernardino Rafael, claimed that the prison break had been orchestrated⁵ externally, blaming citizens who had been protesting against electoral fraud since October 21, 2024.

However, this account was later contradicted by the Minister of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs, Dr. Helena Kida, who oversees the prison system. According to Minister Kida, the escape occurred as a result of a rebellion inside the prison.

Data gathered from our investigation suggests that the main objective of the escape operation was to facilitate the release of three specific groups of individuals:

- **Thirty (30) insurgents**, including Mozambicans and Tanzanians. Unverified information indicates that four of these fugitives were recaptured, one of whom was Tanzanian.
- **Fifteen (15) kidnappers and drug traffickers**. Unverified reports indicate that only five of them escaped successfully, with two already in neighboring South Africa. In South Africa, these individuals released videos and reportedly are now being pursued by the South African Police.
- **Two (2) individuals** involved in the drug trafficking case related to the seizure at Maputo International Airport, including Indian nationals.

¹ <https://opais.co.mz/1534-criminosos-fugiram-da-cadeia-central-de-maputo/>

² <https://opais.co.mz/1534-criminosos-fugiram-da-cadeia-central-de-maputo/>

³ <https://www.dw.com/pt-002/recapturados-322-reclusos-evadidos-em-maputo/a-71202627>

⁴ <https://cddmoz.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Fuga.mp4>

⁵ https://cddmoz.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Duas-semanas-depois-Ainda-nao-ha-nomes-das-vitimas-do-massacre-perpetrado-pelas-forcas-de-seguranca.pdf?fbclid=IwY2xjawHxvmpIeHRuA2FlbOlXMAABHXKboEKm4LmIp_-4vGET-2GlxMj4KCCdCxhsJcFJr1fzY9IRoTkjJScw_aem_27dBpYQuHF4U2tScbBeClQ

Logistics of the Escape

- The two individuals connected to the drug case were transported in a white Mazda BT-50 vehicle.
 - The kidnappers were transported in a blue Ford Ranger double-cab vehicle.
 - The 30 insurgents were transported in unmarked vehicles toward the district of Moamba, Maputo Province, where they were transferred to other vehicles. It is believed they crossed the border into South Africa.
- Contradictory sources suggest that during the chaos, vehicle movement was restricted around the Central and BO prisons, making it difficult to verify whether vehicles matching these descriptions were indeed present.

Circumstances Enabling the Escape

- **Reduced Personnel:** On December 25, only a few SERNAP guards were on duty. Sources indicate that many guards were absent due to transportation issues caused by ongoing protests, rather than deliberate absenteeism. Guards on duty were provided with weapons but limited ammunition, allegedly due to a “shortage of ammunition.”
- **Suspicious Reinforcements:** A security reinforcement unit was deployed to the prisons. However, this group is suspected of being involved in facilitating the escape.

Preparations Before the Escape

- **Concentration of High-Risk Inmates:** Over 30 high-risk inmates were placed in the Quarantine Cell, an unprecedented move. Some sources dispute this, claiming the escapees were housed in other blocks rather than the disciplinary cells.
- **Cell Break-In:** While it was reported that the cell was broken into from the inside, evidence suggests the gate was breached from the outside before the chaos began. Some sources claim the rebellion started at 1:00 PM, not 12:00 PM, during meal distribution, meaning inmates were already outside their cells.
- **SERNAP Guards Overpowered:** Unarmed SERNAP guards were overpowered and used as human shields by the inmates.

Execution of the Escape

- Inmates from BO breached the wall separating BO and the Central Prison, reinforcing the escaping group. They carried a firearm seized from a guard.
- The incident began around 10:00 AM, but authorities were only notified at 12:00 PM, suggesting a deliberate delay to allow the operation to unfold. Sources indicate gunfire continued until around 3:00 PM when the guards ran out of ammunition, allowing inmates to escape using guards as shields.

Involvement of External Forces

- The UIR arrived at the scene seemingly already aware that the target group of escapees had fled. Other sources claim the military was the first external force to arrive but only after the inmates had already dispersed.
- The UIR reportedly fired indiscriminately from outside the prison, while SERNAP guards fired from inside, resulting in crossfire.

Victims and Consequences

- **Seventy (70) inmates** were killed⁶ at the prison gates during crossfire involving SERNAP, UIR, and military forces.
- **Thirty-four (34) inmates** were killed inside the prison, reportedly executed at close range. Some sources dispute this, stating some died from injuries sustained during the chaos.
- Video evidence shows military personnel executing inmates who were still alive after the initial gunfire.

Burial of the Dead

While 34 deaths were officially recorded, only 4–5 bodies were identified and returned to their families. The remaining unidentified bodies were buried in mass graves in Michafutene Cemetery⁷.

Preliminary Conclusions

This preliminary investigation reveals strong indications of high-level political coordination behind the escape, involving top officials from the Mozambican state and Frelimo party.

The prison break appears to have been a calculated operation to create chaos and cover up the release of specific inmates held at BO. This orchestrated scheme was disguised as a popular uprising, diverting attention from its true criminal intent.

nal intent.

The evidence suggests more than 102 fatalities, with some buried in mass graves—a heinous act under investigation.

Further efforts are required to uncover the full scope of those involved and hold them accountable. Transparency, justice, and a firm response are critical to restoring public confidence and preventing similar incidents in the future.

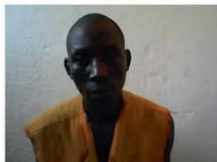
⁶ https://cddmoz.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Duas-semanas-depois-Ainda-nao-ha-nomes-das-vitimas-do-massacre-perpetrado-pelas-forcas-de-seguranca.pdf?fbclid=IwY2xjawHxvmpIeHRuA2FlbQlxMAABHXKboEKm4LfMlp_-4vGET-2GljxMj4KCCdCxhsJcFJr1fzY9IRoTkjJScw_aem_27dBpYQuHF4U2iScbBeCfO

⁷ <https://cddmoz.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Vala-Comum.mp4>



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RECLUSOS EVADIDOS INDICIADOS POR CRIMES DE TERRORISMO



Dados do processo	
Nome:	Mijai Mijai
Nacionalidade:	Mocambicana
Crime:	Organização contra o estado e terrorismo
Estado:	Condenado a 16 anos de prisao e 5 meses de mult



Dados do processo	
Nome:	Tualibo Amade Tualibo
Nacionalidade:	Tanzaniana
Crime:	Terrorismo, Associação para Delinquir, ordem e tranquilidade pública e conspiração
Estado:	Condenado a 16 anos de Prisao



Dados do processo	
Nome:	Tuquile Sumaile
Nacionalidade:	Mocambicana
Crime:	Organização contra o estado e terrorismo
Estado:	Condenado a 18 Anos de Prisao



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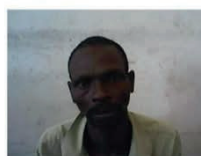
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Dados do processo	
Nome:	Celso Antonio Tivane
Nacionalidade:	Mocambicana
Crime:	Terrorismo, Assoc Criminosa, Financiamento ao Terrorismo.
Estado:	Preventivo



Dados do processo	
Nome:	Bahate Chilinde Sueda
Nacionalidade:	Tanzaniana
Crime:	Terrorismo, Assoc Criminosa, Financiamento ao Terrorismo.
Estado:	Condenado a 16 anos de Prisao



Dados do processo	
Nome:	A/Maudji Abudai
Nacionalidade:	Mocambicana
Crime:	Terrorismo
Estado:	Condenado a 16 anos de Prisao



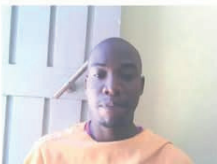


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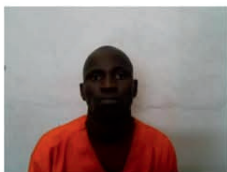
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Dados do processo	
Nome:	Justino Jose Mandlaze
Nacionalidade:	Mocambicana
Crime:	Sequestro, associacao criminosa, armas proibidas e roubo agravado
Estado:	Condenado a 20 Anos de Prisao



Dados do processo	
Nome:	Omar Alberto Toqueleque
Nacionalidade:	Mocambicana
Crime:	Rapto & Burla e Falsificação de documentos.
Estado:	Preventivo



Dados do processo	
Nome:	Paulo Joao Massingue
Nacionalidade:	Mocambicana
Crime:	Roubo concorrendo com violação, cárcere privado ou ofensas corporais
Estado:	Condenado a 20 Anos de Prisao



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RECLUSOS EVADIDOS INDICIADOS POR CRIMES DE RAPTO



Dados do processo	
Nome:	Azrudin Salimbhai Bhai Gokarani
Nacionalidade:	Indiana
Crime:	Rapto
Estado:	Condenado a 22 Anos de Prisao



Dados do processo	
Nome:	Baptista Roberto Muanzule
Nacionalidade:	Mocambicana
Crime:	Rapto
Estado:	Preventivo

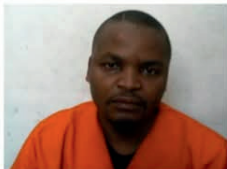


Dados do processo	
Nome:	Bhekuxolo Veron Ngoyu
Nacionalidade:	Sul Africana
Crime:	Rapto
Estado:	Preventivo



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Dados do processo	
Nome:	André Alberto Mazivila
Nacionalidade:	Mocambicana
Crime:	Rapto
Estado:	Preventivo



Dados do processo	
Nome:	Angelo Gonsalves Matavele
Nacionalidade:	Mocambicana
Crime:	Rapto
Estado:	Condenado a 12 Anos de prisao



Dados do processo	
Nome:	Azevedo Artur Manjate
Nacionalidade:	Mocambicana
Crime:	Rapto
Estado:	Condenado a 12 anos de prisao

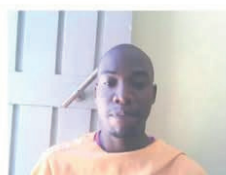


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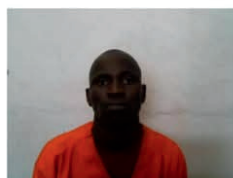
RECLUSOS EVADIDOS INDICIADOS POR CRIMES DE RAPTO



Dados do processo	
Nome:	Justino Jose Mandlaze
Nacionalidade:	Mocambicana
Crime:	Sequestro, associacao criminosa, armas proibidas e roubo agravado
Estado:	Condenado a 20 Anos de Prisao



Dados do processo	
Nome:	Omar Alberto Toqueleque
Nacionalidade:	Mocambicana
Crime:	Rapto & Burla e Falsificação de documentos.
Estado:	Preventivo

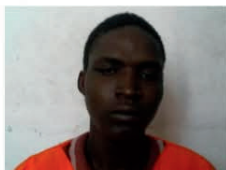


Dados do processo	
Nome:	Paulo Joao Massingue
Nacionalidade:	Mocambicana
Crime:	Roubo concorrendo com violação, cárcere privado ou ofensas corporais
Estado:	Condenado a 20 Anos de Prisao

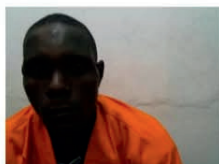


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RECLUSOS EVADIDOS INDICIADOS POR CRIMES DE RAPTO



Dados do processo	
Nome:	Rafael Filipe Tembe
Nacionalidade:	Mocambicana
Crime:	Rapto
Estado:	Preventivo



Dados do processo	
Nome:	Raul Quentino Ofumane Gove
Nacionalidade:	Mocambicana
Crime:	Rapto e Carcere Privado
Estado:	Condenado a 22 anos de Prisao



Dados do processo	
Nome:	Samuel Lepota Leboca
Nacionalidade:	Sul Africana
Crime:	Rapto
Estado:	Preventivo



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Dados do processo	
Nome:	Ilidio Frederico Miguel Balango
Nacionalidade:	Mocambicana
Crime:	Rapto
Estado:	Preventivo



Dados do processo	
Nome:	Jaime Ernesto Elias Mahose
Nacionalidade:	Mocambicana
Crime:	Rapto/Roubo concorrendo com homicidio qualificado
Estado:	Condenado a 24 anos de prisao



Dados do processo	
Nome:	Julio Eugenio Siteo
Nacionalidade:	Mocambicana
Crime:	Rapto
Estado:	Condenado a 16 anos de prisao






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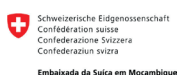
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