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Grave human rights violations reported: Massacre at Maputo Central Prison

- The Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CDD) has filed, yesterday, January 6, a formal complaint with the Attorney General's Office of Mozambique, highlighting severe human rights violations that occurred during the mass escape of inmates from the Maputo Central Prison and the Maximum-Security Facility (B.O.) on December 25, 2024.



The Facts

According to reports, 1,534 prisoners escaped from the said facilities. However, what was initially reported as a prison break culminated in summary executions and severe violations of fundamental rights by the security forces. Widely shared videos reveal that many recaptured inmates were killed, with their bodies disposed of in an inhumane manner. While the National Penitentiary Service (SERNAP) officially confirmed 37 deaths, the CDD indicates that the actual

number may exceed 130, with over 100 allegedly buried in mass graves.

Narratives of the events suggest that, following their recapture, prisoners were placed in rooms within the prison facilities, where mass executions were carried out. The police were also accused of invading homes, conducting indiscriminate shootings, and disrespecting the rights of the deceased's families by denying them dignified funerals.

Impact on Families

Families of the prisoners are facing uncertainty and grief. Many remain unaware of the whereabouts of their loved ones, while others have been deprived of the opportunity to perform funeral rituals—a violation of Mozambique's cultural and religious values.

CDD's Demands

The CDD calls for:

- A thorough investigation into the events;
- Reparations for the victims and their families;
- The exhumation of bodies buried in mass graves to ensure dignified funeral rites.

Institutional Responsibility

The CDD holds the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs, and the SERNAP directly responsible for these violations. The actions of the security forces disrespected:

- The right to life, as enshrined in Mozambique's Constitution;
- Principles of human dignity established in national and international legislation;
- PRM (Mozambican Police) conduct standards, which mandate proportionality and reasonableness in the use of force.

A Call for Justice

The December events once again expose the fragility of Mozambique's justice system and underscore the urgency for profound reforms to ensure respect for human rights. The CDD reaffirms its commitment to fighting for dignity and justice for the victims and their families, insisting that impunity must not prevail in the face of such brutality.

These events are not just a national tragedy but a wake-up call for urgent and decisive action to protect human rights in the country.





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