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Head of Operations at B.O. Prison and Two Inmates Among Suspected Perpetrators of Elvino Dias and Paulo Guambe's Murder

- On October 16, 2024, the Head of the Department of Penitentiary Operations (DOP), Roque Xavier, facilitated the irregular release of inmates Julião Ruben Munguambe and Edson Cassiano Lacerda Sílica from B.O. Maximum-Security Prison. On October 19, 2024, while outside the prison facilities, Elvino Dias and Paulo Guambe were brutally and cowardly murdered. Subsequently, on October 21, 2024, the DOP Head ordered the deletion of entry and exit records for the two inmates.



Edson Cassiano Lacerda Sílica

The Center for Democracy and Human Rights (CDD) filed a complaint on Wednesday, January 8, 2025, with the Office of the Attorney General (PGR) against Roque Xavier and inmates Julião Ruben Munguambe and Edson Cassiano Lacer-

da Sílica for suspected involvement in the murder of Elvino Dias, a lawyer and advisor to presidential candidate Venâncio Mondlane, and Paulo Guambe, a representative of the Optimistic People for the Development of Mozambique Party (PODEMOS).

The Facts

1. Irregular Release of Inmates

According to information obtained by CDD, on October 16, 2024, under the orders of Roque Xavier, inmates Julião Ruben Munguambe and Edson Cassiano Lacerda Sílica were removed from the B.O. prison without escort or formal authorization, allegedly to perform agricultural work in Moamba. They remained outside the prison facilities for three days, in clear violation of Article 90 of Law No. 26/2019, dated December 27, which prohibits unsupervised overnight stays outside prisons.

2. Manipulation of Records

On October 21, 2024, Roque Xavier ordered the deletion of the inmates' entry and exit records, an apparent attempt to conceal these irregularities.

3. Connection to the Murders of Dias and Guambe

During the period when the inmates were outside the prison, in the early hours of October 19, 2024, lawyers Elvino Dias and Paulo Guambe were brutally murdered. The double homicide occurred during the same timeframe that the DOP Head authorized the irregular release and ordered the destruction of records related to the inmates' mo-

vements. Preliminary information suggests that inmates Julião Ruben Munguambe and Edson Cassiano Lacerda Sílica, both with a history of involvement in serious crimes, were released and armed to execute these murders.

The victims were shot 25 times at close range in what appears to be a planned and extremely violent execution. Notably, Edson Cassiano Lacerda Sílica, one of the suspected assassins, was previously part of a death squad responsible for the murder of social activist and human rights defender Anastácio Matavel on October 7, 2019, also during an electoral context, similar to the assassinations of Dias and Guambe.



Mismanagement in the Penitentiary System Facilitates Crime

This connection between the irregular actions of the DOP Head and these heinous crimes highlights severe issues within the management of Mozambique's penitentiary system and raises questions about possible complicity in actions that undermine the rule of law.

The DOP Head's Troubled Past

Historically, Roque Xavier has been no stranger to controversy. CDD sources reveal that he has a history of misconduct, including allegations of renting out firearms for illicit activities. Similar reports have surfaced from other provinces, such as Cabo Delgado. Despite this, no effective measures have been taken to remove him from strategic roles in the penitentiary system.

CDD's Demands

In light of the facts, CDD's complaint calls for:

- a) An urgent and independent investigation to establish the responsibilities of Roque Xavier and the two inmates;
- b) Criminal charges against Julião Ruben Munguambe and Edson Cassiano Lacerda Sílica for the murders of Elvino Dias and Paulo Guambe;
- c) Disciplinary and criminal accountability for DOP Head Roque Xavier;
- d) Testimonies from protected witnesses, whose identities should be safeguarded via CDD, to ensure their safety and security.

Conclusion

The presented evidence demonstrates a clear pattern of abuse of power and serious legal violations. Roque Xavier's actions undermine the integrity of the penitentiary system and facilitate heinous crimes such as the murders of Elvino Dias and Paulo Guambe.

In this context, CDD demands that autho-

rities act rigorously and urgently to deliver justice for the victims, hold those responsible accountable, and prevent future abuses within the penitentiary system. The Office of the Attorney General has a duty to act swiftly and transparently to demonstrate that no one is above the law.



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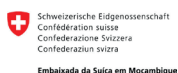
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