



HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS DURING THE POST-ELECTION CRISIS IN MOZAMBIQUE

OCTOBER 2024 – JANUARY 2025

PROGRESS REPORT

This report calls for the establishment of a Truth and Accountability Commission on Human Rights as a key instrument of transitional justice, to thoroughly investigate these violations, ensure accountability, and provide justice and reparations for the affected communities.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This preliminary report compiles data on the deaths that occurred during the protests following the October 2024 elections, covering the period from October 21 to January 15. The data collection was conducted by a team organized into 11 groups—one dedicated to the city of Maputo and others for the provinces (with the exception of Niassa, which had no direct coverage). In total, the effort involved 21 CDD staff members and 315 volunteer paralegals and interns, distributed throughout the country and across various districts, who sent alerts regarding deaths, injuries, and detentions, all of which were recorded in our database.

Regarding the methodology, the information was collected through communication channels established at the central offices in Maputo and directly by volunteer paralegals and interns in each district, as well as through data circulating on social media. For the purposes of this report, we define “injured” as those who suffered harm from bullets fired by authorities—including actions by the Rapid Intervention Unit (UIR), the Protection Police (PRM), and the National Criminal Investigation Service (SERNIC)—or from other militarized devices, such as tear gas. Concerning “detentions,” we only include cases in which individuals were actually taken to police stations and a formal process was initiated, excluding those who were released without such process. It is important to note that the figures presented do not represent the total number of arbitrary detentions, but only the cases confirmed in which the CDD intervened to secure the individuals’ release.

With regard to deaths, the report covers cases of civilians who lost their lives due to bullets or other forms of gunfire, or who, even after sustaining injuries, later succumbed—thus excluding police casualties and members of the Naparamas. During this period, 600 death alerts were identified from various sources, in addition to 19 alerts from healthcare facilities. Based on this data set, the CDD undertook a rigorous cross-verification process that confirmed 348 civilian deaths, of which 215 cases were verified through the presentation of death certificates, evidence from funerals, and family visits—particularly in Maputo, where the verification process was 90% complete. Of the 215 verified cases, 160 have already been submitted to the Attorney General’s Office for the State’s accountability and compensation to the families.

Additionally, a specific case stands out: the 102 fatalities resulting from the escape from the Central Prison of Maputo and the Maximum Security Penitentiary of Maputo, known as BO. In this case, the PRM confirmed only 34 bodies, of which only 6 were properly identified and handed over to the families.

The remaining occurrences, spread across the provinces, still require additional confirmation—a process that will be carried out in the coming months, province by province and district by district, including investigations into reports of mass graves in the provinces of Zambézia and Nampula.

Numerous challenges were encountered during this process, including the immediate conduct of funerals without proper registration of deaths, the lack of death certificates, advanced decomposition conditions that hindered identification, and the fear among families who preferred to remain silent, compounded by the limited capacity and insufficient training of the team for this task. The team was initially prepared for a scenario of human rights violations on the scale of those during the 2014, 2019, and 2023 elections, but not for the magnitude of the post-electoral crisis of 2024. Nevertheless, the team made the necessary adjustments and was able to provide a satisfactory response.

Although the data remain preliminary, this report conclusively evidences the devastating impact of the post-electoral protests across the country, underscoring the urgent need for coordinated measures to restore the dignity and human rights of the affected communities.

DATA PRESENTATION BY PROVINCE

MAPUTO

Maputo is the province with the highest number of victims nationwide, serving as the stage for the bloodiest protests in Mozambique’s history. During the period under analysis, a total of 190 people lost their lives in connection with the protests, comprising 102 deaths during the escape from the Central Prison and BO, and 60 deaths in various incidents with the police (56 men and 4 women). In addition, 28 bodies were found charred in a warehouse in the Benfica neighborhood. Regarding the deaths from the escape from the Central Prison and BO, the PRM confirmed 34 fatalities, but subsequent investigations by the CDD indicate that there were 102 fatal victims, of which only 6 were duly identified and their bodies handed over to families. The remaining bodies were discreetly buried in mass graves at the Michafutene cemetery, in the Marracuene district.

Thus, in Maputo, there were a total of 190 registered deaths: 102 from the escape from the Central Prison and BO, 60 in various incidents with the police, and 28 charred bodies from the Benfica warehouse. Among these fatalities, the 60 deaths in various police-related incidents have been duly identified; 4 of the charred bodies from the Benfica warehouse have been identified, with the remainder still in the process of identification.

During the same period, various individuals sustained injuries, with 169 confirmed cases of gunfire-related injuries recorded during the protests between October and December 2024.

Also, during this period, numerous people were arbitrarily detained, with 270 cases recorded by the Protection Police (PRM), the UIR, and SERNIC at the police stations.

In collaboration with the Mozambique Bar Association, the CDD provided legal support to 117 individuals (89 men and 28 women), primarily in the cities of Maputo and Matola, as well as in the Moamba districts – specifically at the Administrative Post of Ressano Garcia and in the Manhiça district. Direct support was also provided to 36 families of fatal victims and those injured, with 30 families in the city of Maputo and 6 in Ressano Garcia. Among the 6 cases in Ressano Garcia, 5 involved transportation and food purchase services for protesters detained at the provincial command of SERNIC in Matola.

Additionally, the CDD offered basic support to orphaned children for Christmas, assisting 7 children in the city of Maputo and 5 children in the province of Maputo.

GAZA

During the period under analysis, unexpectedly high levels of violence were recorded in the districts of Chibuto, Chóckwè, Bilene, and Xai-Xai, resulting in the destruction of both public and private infrastructure, as well as the deaths of young people. The violence resulted in the death of 8 young individuals (6 males and 2 females) due to gunfire. Additionally, 19 people (18 males and 1 female) sustained injuries from gunfire during the protests in Chibuto, Xai-Xai, and Bilene-Macia. Sixty individuals (49 males and 11 females) were arbitrarily detained by the Protection Police (PRM) and the UIR. The CDD provided legal support to 19 people (18 men and 1 woman) in the district of Chibuto and the city of Xai-Xai, and directly supported 6 families of fatal and injured victims in these areas.

INHAMBANE

In the period under analysis, high levels of violence were observed in the northern districts of this province, particularly in Massinga, Inhassoro, and Vilanculos. The violence resulted in the death of 9 individuals (7 men and 2 women) due to gunfire. Additionally, 59 people (50 men and 9 women) sustained injuries from gunfire during the protests, and 30 people (29 men and 1 woman) were arbitrarily detained by the PRM and the UIR. The CDD provided legal support to 27 individuals (26 men and 1 woman) in the districts of Massinga and Inhassoro, and directly supported 4 families of fatal victims in Inhassoro.

SOFALA

Following a period of relative calm, intense protests occurred in December in Sofala, resulting in 37 deaths, burned houses, and the detention of young people. The Mayor of Beira, Albano Carige, even received death threats. Of the 37 fatalities, 36 were men and 1 was a woman—all due to gunfire. Additionally, 29 people (28 men and 1 woman) sustained injuries from gunfire during the protests, and 110 individuals (99 men and 11 women) were arbitrarily detained by the PRM and the UIR. The CDD provided legal support to 87 individuals (68 men and 19 women) in the city of Beira, and directly supported 16 families of fatal and injured victims in the urban districts of Beira and the Gorongosa district. Furthermore, several detentions took place in the northern districts of Sofala—namely in Caia, Chemba, and Marromeu—but these were not covered in this report.

MANICA

The city of Chimoio and the districts of Catandica and Vanduzi recorded, at the peak of the protests (November and December), a total of 13 deaths and significant infrastructure destruction. All fatal victims were men. Thirty-nine individuals—30 men and 9 women—sustained injuries from gunfire during the protests. In Manica, 37 individuals (35 men and 2 women) were arbitrarily detained by the Protection Police (PRM) and the UIR. The CDD provided legal support to 60 individuals (53 men and 7 women) in Chimoio and Catandica, and also provided direct support to 26 families of fatal and injured victims in the city of Chimoio, as well as in the districts of Vanduzi and Catandica.

TETE

The Province of Tete experienced some unrest during November and December, with 9 fatal victims—2 confirmed and 7 unconfirmed. During the period under analysis, 2 men died from gunfire; these victims have been duly identified, while 7 remain unidentified. Additionally, a total of 29 people (20 men and 9 women) sustained injuries from gunfire during the protests. Several individuals were arbitrarily detained, with 117 cases recorded at police stations (97 men and 20 women). In terms of support, the CDD provided legal assistance to 10 individuals (7 men and 3 women), primarily in the city of Tete and the district of Moatize, and directly supported 16 families of fatal and injured victims in the city of Tete and the district of Moatize.

ZAMBÉZIA

The Province of Zambézia experienced significant tension during the period under analysis, particularly in the districts of Morumbala, Marromeu, and Milange. A total of 40 fatal victims were confirmed—35 men and 5 women—excluding the Naparamas. There is also information regarding the existence of two mass graves in the district of Morumbala, each containing approximately 10 young individuals. The CDD has initiated efforts to identify the victims in these mass graves. Additionally, 89 people (80 men and 9 women) sustained injuries from gunfire during the protests. Several individuals were arbitrarily detained, with 70 cases recorded at police stations (65 men and 5 women) in the districts of Morumbala and Milange, as well as in the city of Quelimane. Furthermore, 95 people (89 men and 6 women) in the districts of Morumbala and Milange, and in the city of Quelimane, received legal support from the CDD, while 6 families of fatal and injured victims received direct assistance.

NAMPULA

During the months of November and December 2024, Mozambique faced a severe human rights crisis, particularly in the province of Nampula, one of the most populous in the country. The province registered an alarming number of arbitrary detentions and deaths of democracy and human rights defenders. In Nampula, detentions began as early as mid-October. As in Zambézia, there is as yet unconfirmed information regarding the existence of two mass graves—one in Mecubure and another in Ribáuè. Regarding the grave in Ribáuè, it is alleged that it contains Naparamas who were assassinated on December 10.

During the period under analysis, 155 people (136 men and 19 women) lost their lives due to gunfire in various parts of the province, with a high incidence in the city of Nampula (Namicopo neighborhood), as well as in the districts of Moma, Larde, Angoche, Mecuburre, and Namialo. Additionally, 89 people (80 men and 9 women) sustained injuries from gunfire, and 760 people (625 men and 135 women) were arbitrarily detained by the PRM in the city of Nampula (Namicopo neighborhood) and in the districts of Moma, Larde, Angoche, Mecuburre, and Namialo. The CDD provided legal support to 95 individuals (89 men and 6 women) and direct assistance to 55 families of fatal victims, 57 families of injured victims, and 57 families of victims of arbitrary detentions. The identification process of the victims in Nampula is still ongoing, having been temporarily suspended to address reports of missing persons.

CABO DELGADO

During the period under analysis, the province of Cabo Delgado recorded a high level of protests that resulted in the deaths of 19 people (18 men and 1 woman). In addition to these fatalities, 69 individuals (60 men and 9 women) sustained injuries in the city of Pemba and in the districts of Montepuez and Chiure; 89 people (80 men and 9 women) were arbitrarily detained. Following the protests, the CDD provided legal support to 17 individuals (16 men and 1 woman) in the city of Pemba and in the districts of Montepuez and Chiure. The CDD also provided direct assistance to 15 families of fatal victims, 11 families of injured victims, and 17 families of victims of arbitrary detentions in the city of Pemba and in the districts of Montepuez and Chiure.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

This preliminary report presents data regarding the deaths that occurred during the protests following the October 2024 elections, covering the period from October 21 to January 15. A total of 600 death alerts from various sources were identified, along with 19 alerts from healthcare units. From these, 348 civilian deaths were confirmed. Of the confirmed cases, 215 were verified through the submission of death certificates, evidence from funerals, and family visits—especially in Maputo, where the verification process was 90% complete.

The data by province illustrate an alarming reality, with Maputo and Nampula emerging as the main epicenters of violence, while Gaza, Inhambane, Sofala, Manica, Tete, and Zambézia also report significant numbers. These figures highlight the devastating impact of this period of extreme violence and reflect a profound humanitarian crisis in which the protection of human rights has been severely compromised and the lives of thousands of citizens have been brutally lost.

In light of this scenario, two key processes are underway:

- **Continuity of Verification:** The confirmation and verification of fatal victims, including efforts to investigate the alleged mass graves in Zambézia and Nampula. At the conclusion of this work, narratives will be developed to preserve the memory of the victims, ensuring that their stories are never forgotten.
- **Accountability of Those Involved:** A process has already been initiated, resulting in the submission of 160 cases to the Attorney General’s Office, with the aim of ensuring justice and compensation for the victims’ families.

RECOMMENDATION:

The period between October 2024 and January 2025 represents the bloodiest chapter in Mozambique’s democratic history since 1994, with over 600 victims attributed to actions allegedly coordinated by the State—actions that organized and perpetrated the killing of civilians across various contexts and regions. The chaotic environment in which these events occurred severely hindered proper documentation and obstructed the victims’ and their families’ access to justice.

In light of this, we strongly recommend the establishment of a **Truth and Accountability Commission on Human Rights**. As a key instrument of transitional justice, this commission should bring together a diverse range of stakeholders—including government representatives, civil society organizations, and victims’ advocates—to collect and verify testimonies, thoroughly document the events, and hold those responsible accountable. Furthermore, the commission should ensure that affected families receive appropriate reparations, addressing historical injustices and paving the way for necessary institutional reforms.

Such a mechanism is essential to restore the dignity and human rights of the impacted communities, promote accountability, and foster reconciliation. It will serve not only as a forum for uncovering the truth but also as a catalyst for building a more just and inclusive society in Mozambique.



MISSION:
Inspiring and driving actions to protect human rights, strengthen democracy, and promote justice.

MISSÃO:
Inspirar e impulsionar ações para proteger os direitos humanos, fortalecer a democracia e promover a justiça.



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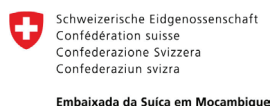
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