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Wednesday, April 2, 2025 | Year V, NO. 416 | Director: Prof. Adriano Nuvunga | English

**RECONCILIATION WITHOUT TRUTH IS AN ILLUSION**

## Mozambique's call for justice



**ANNA MOYO**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF VIOLENCE AND RECONCILIATION

## Introduction

During the high-level webinar “Truth and Justice for Post-Election Human Rights Violations in Mozambique,” held on March 11, 2025, transitional justice expert Anna Moyo, Executive Director of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, shared critical reflections on the

challenges and opportunities for an authentic justice process in Mozambique. Drawing from her regional experience and analysis of the Mozambican context, Moyo emphasized the centrality of truth, victim-centered listening, and community inclusion as essential pillars for lasting reconciliation.

### Truth as a starting point

Moyo stressed that truth must be the foundation of any genuine reconciliation process. In her view, it is impossible to unite a deeply divided society—be it across ethnic groups, regions, communities, or political factions—without first knowing and acknowledging the facts. Truth must be understood as a collective and plural process of listening and recognition, going beyond official narratives to include the voices of victims, perpetrators, witnesses, and survivors.

She argued that without this inclusive process, any attempt at national reconstruction would be superficial and likely reinforce a culture of impunity. When those responsible for grave violations are not held accountable, society is sent a dangerous message—that violence can be used without consequences, thereby perpetuating cycles of abuse and suffering.

### Lessons from the Past

Moyo referenced Mozambique’s recent history as a cautionary tale about the dangers of excluding victims from peace processes. The General Peace Agreement that ended the civil war between FRELIMO and RENAMO, she noted, was primarily a political arrangement, excluding victims and affected communities. As a result, the reconciliation achieved was shallow and fragile—partly explaining the resurgence of hostilities in later years.

This failure to address and heal past wounds undermined national stability and deepened internal divisions. Moyo asserted that popular participation must be central in any transitional justice process. Solutions negotiated solely by political elites are often unsustainable.

### Truth must be comprehensive

another key point raised by Moyo was the need for a truth-seeking process that goes beyond recent electoral repression. She called for a historical and broad-based approach—one that includes the civil war, the armed insurgency in the north since 2017, and the more recent cycles of violence.

Each of these chapters, she explained, has left deep scars on Mozambican society, with systematic violations of civil, political, economic, social, and environmental rights. The failure to confront these injustices has been a major factor in their recurrence. For Moyo, institutionalized silence and the policy of “official forgetting” fuel a culture of impunity that erodes democracy.

## Conclusion

As she concluded her remarks, Anna Moyo warned that Mozambique is at a critical juncture. Ignoring past traumas risks repeating them. Transitional justice is not a luxury—it is an urgent necessity for the consolidation of peace, democracy, and social cohesion. It is a courageous path that requires listening, recognition, and accountability. Only by confronting the truth can Mozambique break the cycle of violence and rebuild its social contract on a foundation of justice and reconciliation.

## Anna Moyo's Recommendations for the Transitional Justice Process in Mozambique

### To the Government of Mozambique:

- Immediately initiate a truth and reconciliation process with broad community participation;
- Ensure that victims from all phases of conflict are heard and adequately compensated;
- Avoid exclusionary political agreements and promote solutions rooted in local realities;
- Include representatives of women, youth, victims, and marginalized communities in negotiation processes.

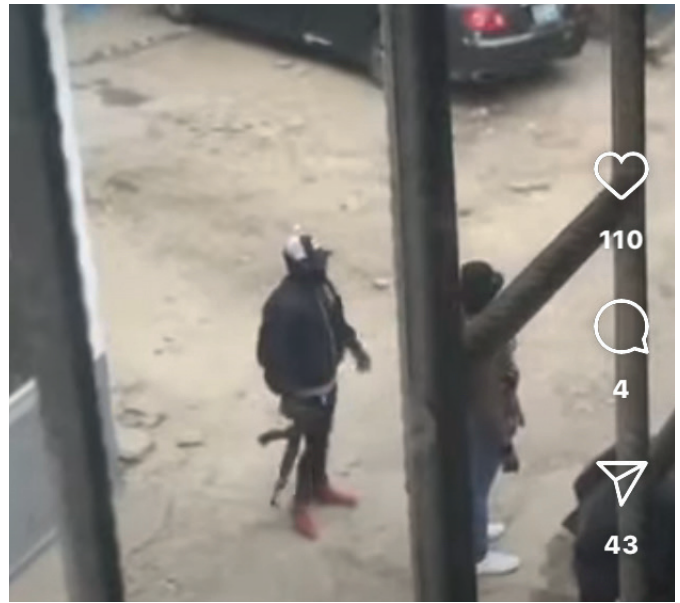
### To Civil Society:

- Promote grassroots listening processes and community-based truth documentation;
- Establish spaces for memory, inter-community dialogue, and victim support;
- Demand transparency and participation in any official transitional justice initiative.

### To the International Community:

- Provide technical and financial support to transitional justice processes;
- Ensure that initiatives respect the principles of inclusion, victim centrality, and national leadership;
- Facilitate exchange of experiences with other African countries that have implemented similar mechanisms.







## MISSÃO:

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


## MISSION:

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

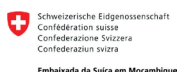
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