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Communities in Balama strengthened on the Voluntary Principles on security and human rights

- Thirty-five members of local communities, government officials, representatives of extractive companies, and civil society organizations participated in a capacity-building workshop on the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR) on February 13, 2026, in the Balama district. The initiative aimed to strengthen local capacities in the application of the VPSHR in the district, contributing to the building of more balanced, responsible, and sustainable relationships between businesses, communities, and government.



In a context where the expansion of the extractive industry intersects with complex challenges of security, governance, and human rights, it becomes increasingly important for different local actors to share a common understanding of principles and practices that promote balanced relationships between com-

panies, communities, and authorities. Consolidating spaces for dialogue and joint reflection contributes to reducing tensions, strengthening trust between parties, and promoting security approaches that respect human dignity and the fundamental rights of populations affected by economic activities.

During the meeting, it became evident that, in various contexts, tensions between communities, businesses, and security forces have resulted from communication failures, information asymmetries, and limitations in access to channels for dialogue and complaint resolution. In this scenario, aligning institutional and business practices with international human rights standards becomes essential for reducing risks, preventing abuses, and promoting more stable relationships between the different stakeholders.

The discussions focused on the differentiated

responsibilities of the State, extractive companies, and public and private security forces, as well as the importance of adopting practices that prevent the excessive use of force and protect the rights of communities. Participants also had the opportunity to reflect on critical issues such as the relationship between gender, security, and human rights, the risks associated with extractive activities, the challenges faced by communities in accessing grievance mechanisms, and possible strategies to overcome them.

VPSHR as a tool for promoting responsible security and respect for human rights

The training was structured in thematic sessions led by CDD facilitators, using a participatory methodology that combined technical presentations, analysis of concrete cases, and moments of collective reflection. The process sought to strengthen the knowledge and practical skills of local actors in the application of VPSHR and to promote security approaches based on respect for human rights, conflict prevention, and the strengthening of dialogue between businesses, communities, and authorities.

During the sessions, the fundamentals of VPSHR were presented, including their origin, objectives, and the differentiated responsibilities of the State, extractive companies, and public and private security forces. Participants showed particular interest in understanding the role of local authorities and companies in ensuring respect for human rights and preventing abuses associated with extractive activities.

The training also explored the interconnections between gender, security, and human rights, highlighting how women and girls are often affected differently by the dynamics associated with the extractive industry. Issues related to gender-based violence, women's economic exclusion, and the importance of integrating gender-sensitive approaches into security and risk management strategies were discussed.

Another central component focused on practical risk assessment tools in the extractive sec-

tor, including risks related to the excessive use of force, conflicts with communities, and disproportionate impacts on vulnerable groups. The importance of integrating the gender dimension in identifying and mitigating these risks was also highlighted.

Multisectoral dialogue was another central theme of the training. Participants reflected on the importance of establishing structured communication channels between businesses, communities, and authorities as a way to prevent conflicts and facilitate the resolution of complaints. The main barriers limiting communities' access to complaint mechanisms were also discussed, including a lack of knowledge of existing procedures, fear of reprisals, and a lack of trust in institutions. In this context, the role of civil society organizations and community monitors as important intermediaries in promoting dialogue and access to justice was highlighted.

The training also addressed the challenges associated with artisanal mining in Cabo Delgado, with a particular focus on the frequent tensions between artisanal miners and industrial mining companies. Participants analyzed concrete cases of conflict, including situations involving the use of force, expulsions, and the criminalization of artisanal miners, and discussed how the VPSHR can contribute to promoting more balanced approaches based on respect for human rights.

Key findings and follow-up actions

The workshop allowed for the identification of several relevant findings regarding the local context of security, governance, and human rights in the extractive sector. Firstly, it was found that knowledge about VPSHR is still limited at the local level, both among community members and among some authorities and institutional actors. Secondly, significant tensions persist between communities, companies, and security forces, often fueled by communication failures, a lack of transparency, and the absence of effective dialogue mechanisms.

It was also found that existing complaint mechanisms are, in many cases, inaccessible or little known by communities, which hinders conflict resolution and increases the risk of escalating tensions. The discussions also highlighted that women and young people face specific risks and exclusions in the context of extractive activities, reinforcing the need for more inclusive and gen-

der-sensitive approaches.

Despite these challenges, participants demonstrated a strong interest in continuing capacity-building processes and deepening dialogue among different local actors. As follow-up actions, the importance of replicating the training in other districts, strengthening dialogue mechanisms between businesses, communities, and authorities, promoting security practices aligned with human rights, and strengthening the role of civil society organizations in monitoring and preventing abuses was highlighted.

The workshop was organized under the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR) initiative in Mozambique, implemented by CDD in partnership with the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs (MJACR) and the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), with support from the Governments of the United Kingdom and Switzerland.





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.



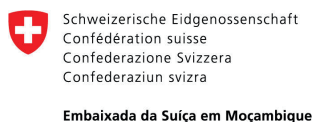
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