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GUARDIÃO DA DEMOCRACIA

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Thursday, April 9, 2026 | Year IV, n.º 56 | Director: Prof. Adriano Nuvunga | English

Journalists and human rights defenders strengthen capacities on the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights in Cabo Delgado

- Twenty-three journalists and human rights defenders from the districts of Balama, Montepuez, and the city of Pemba participated in a training session on the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR) on February 10, 2026, in the city of Pemba. The initiative aimed to strengthen the technical, analytical, and strategic capacities of these actors to understand, monitor, and promote the implementation of the VPSHR in the context of the extractive industry in Cabo Delgado.



In a context marked by the simultaneous presence of armed conflict, the expansion of the extractive industry, and persistent institutional weaknesses, the role of journalists and human rights defenders takes on strategic importance for promoting transparency and accountability. These actors play an essential role in gathering, verifying, and disseminating information about dynamics that often remain largely invisible in the public sphere, including alleged human rights violations associated with security operations and extractive activities. By documenting facts, giving voice to affected communities, and promoting informed public debate,

journalists and defenders contribute to reducing information asymmetries and strengthening mechanisms for scrutinizing the actions of the state, companies, and security forces.

Their independent monitoring work contributes to identifying risks, preventing abuses, and encouraging institutional practices that are more aligned with respect for human rights. By producing rigorous and evidence-based information, these professionals help consolidate an environment of greater integrity, strengthening public debate and encouraging policies and practices that reconcile security, economic development, and respect for human rights.

Voluntary Principles and human rights monitoring in conflict and extractive industries

The training was conducted using a participatory methodology that combined technical presentations, analysis of concrete cases, debates,

and practical exercises, in order to allow participants to relate the content discussed to their experiences in the field.



The sessions focused on analyzing the context of security, human rights, and the extractive industry in Cabo Delgado. Discussions addressed the main challenges associated with the presence of extractive projects in areas affected by

armed conflict, as well as the tensions frequently observed between local communities, extractive companies, artisanal miners, and security forces. Participants also reflected on the risks these dynamics pose to the practice of journalism and

the work of human rights defenders.

The training also included a detailed introduction to the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, with particular emphasis on its three fundamental pillars: risk assessment, relations with public security forces, and relations with private security forces. The differentiated responsibilities of the State, companies, and security forces in preventing abuses and promoting security practices aligned with human rights were discussed.

One of the central moments of the training was dedicated to the analysis of case studies related to alleged human rights violations in the context of the extractive industry in Cabo Delgado. The session allowed participants to discuss concrete situations involving local communities, extractive companies, artisanal mining, and security forces. The analysis of these cases enabled an in-depth reflection on the risks, the rights involved, and possible responses based on the

principles and guidelines of the VPSHR.

Another component focused on practical methodologies for monitoring and documenting human rights violations. Participants were introduced to information gathering and verification techniques, ethical and security principles in journalism, source protection strategies, and physical and digital risk management measures. The importance of a responsible, rigorous, and evidence-based approach to covering sensitive security and human rights issues was also emphasized.

The final session addressed the importance of collective advocacy and strengthening collaborative networks between journalists and human rights defenders. The relevance of solidarity and protection mechanisms was highlighted, including active participation in platforms such as the Mozambican Network of Human Rights Defenders, as a way to reinforce the safety and effectiveness of these actors' work.

Key findings and follow-up actions

The training helped to identify several findings regarding the context in which journalists and human rights defenders operate in Cabo Delgado. Firstly, it was found that knowledge of VPSHR is still limited among many media professionals and civil society actors working in the province.

Secondly, participants highlighted that they face significant risks in carrying out their activities, including institutional pressures, limitations in access to information, and concerns related to their personal safety, particularly when investigating topics related to security, armed conflict, and extractive activities.

The discussions also highlighted the need to strengthen technical skills related to monitoring, documentation, and information verification, in order to ensure that reporting and advocacy processes are based on solid evidence and rigorous methodologies.

Despite these challenges, participants demonstrated a strong interest in strengthening collaborative networks and mechanisms for mutual support between journalists and human rights

defenders. The usefulness of VPSHR as a practical tool for monitoring, analysis, and advocacy in the context of the extractive industry was also recognized.

As follow-up actions, the following stand out: the importance of applying the knowledge acquired in fieldwork, strengthening coordination between journalists and human rights defenders, promoting the integration of participants into protection networks, and continuing capacity-building initiatives. These actions can contribute to more informed, responsible, and secure coverage of security and human rights issues in Cabo Delgado, which will help strengthen transparency and accountability mechanisms in the province.

This training was organized under the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights 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 the support of 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.



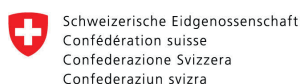
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