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Pausing, reflecting and listening as an act of hope



At the National Conference on Transitional Justice in Mozambique, held on 15 July 2026 at the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs, Fiona Asuke, Programme Manager for Transformative Peace in Africa at the

Open Society Foundations, made an important contribution to the national debate. She stated:

“In a world where societies emerging from conflict are often urged to move quickly and rebuild, choosing to pause, reflect and listen is an act of hope.”

This reflection highlights an essential principle of transitional justice. A society cannot address the consequences of conflict and serious human rights violations simply by declaring that the past has been overcome. Sustainable peace requires an honest examination of what happened, recognition of the harm suffered and meaningful participation by victims and affected communities.

This is particularly relevant to Mozambique. The country's recent history has been marked by recurring conflict, political violence, displacement, exclusion and a loss of public trust in State institutions. In this context, pausing does not mean remaining trapped in the past. It means creating the space needed to establish the truth, recognise victims and understand the institutional and political conditions that allowed violations to occur.

Reconciliation pursued without truth, justice and meaningful consultation with victims may produce formal political settlements, but it is unlikely to restore dignity or rebuild trust. Transitional justice must therefore be approached as a national process grounded in human rights. It should guarantee victims' rights to truth, justice,

reparation and effective remedies, while promoting institutional reforms and guarantees of non-recurrence.

Asuke's remarks also remind us that forgetting is not a basis for sustainable peace. Mozambique must confront its past openly and use the lessons arising from conflict and human rights violations to reform institutions, strengthen accountability and prevent further abuse.

Transitional justice provides a framework for this national reflection. It requires the country to consider not only how to rebuild, but also what must be acknowledged, investigated, repaired and reformed so that reconstruction does not reproduce the same injustices.

Listening to victims and affected communities is not merely an act of remembrance. It is a human rights obligation and an essential part of preventing renewed violence. A credible national process must place their experiences, rights and expectations at the centre of decisions about truth, justice, reparations, reconciliation and institutional reform. This is the foundation required for a just, inclusive and lasting peace in Mozambique.

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MISSION:

*Inspiring and driving actions to protect human rights,
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