



REPÚBLICA DE MOÇAMBIQUE
MINISTÉRIO DA JUSTIÇA, ASSUNTOS CONSTITUCIONAIS E RELIGIOSOS



REDE MOCAMBICANA DOS
DEFENSORES DE DIREITOS HUMANOS
RMDDH

RESILIENCE AND LEGITIMACY OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN THE CONTEXT OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CRISIS IN MOZAMBIQUE

Celebration of International Human Rights Defenders Day – December 9, 2024

Terms of Reference



1. Context

The International Human Rights Defenders Day, celebrated annually on December 9, takes on even greater significance in 2024 amid the severe political and human rights crisis affecting Mozambique. The uncertainty surrounding the general elections of October 9, 2024, marked by allegations of electoral fraud, and state repression against peaceful protests have exposed an alarming scenario of fundamental rights violations. These events have already resulted in the deaths of at least 75 people, along with hundreds of injuries and arbitrary detentions nationwide.

In this challenging context, Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) play an essential and high-risk role. They are the first responders, providing legal, physical, social, and psychological support to victims of violence, often under direct threat to their safety and well-being. Despite the critical impact of their work, HRDs frequently face attempts at delegitimization by the state and sectors of society, which see them as opponents rather than allies in building a more just and inclusive society.

This event seeks to go beyond a mere celebration. It is a space to recognize and honor the courage and resilience of HRDs, as well as to strengthen their capacities and promote their legitimate and indispensable role in the fight for fundamental rights. The occasion also aims to raise awareness among society and decision-makers about the importance of protecting and valuing defenders, who are guardians of freedom and human dignity, especially in times of crisis and adversity.

On this day, we will reaffirm our commitment to the values of justice, equality, and respect for human rights, while celebrating those who, with courage and determination, keep alive the hope for a more democratic and inclusive Mozambique.

2. General Objective

To recognize and celebrate the role of Human Rights Defenders in Mozambique, promoting their resilience and legitimacy in a context marked by political, social, and human rights challenges.

2.1. Specific Objectives

1. Highlight the impact of HRDs' work in supporting victims of human rights violations in the current crisis context.
2. Promote discussions on strategies to reinforce HRDs' resilience and enhance their legitimacy among society and the state.
3. Facilitate the exchange of experiences among HRDs and strengthen networks of solidarity and mutual support.

3. Expected Outcomes

- Increased awareness of the role and challenges faced by Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in Mozambique;
- Identified strategies to strengthen the resilience and security of HRDs;
- Expanded networks of solidarity and collaboration among HRDs;
- Enhanced public and institutional recognition of the importance of HRDs for democracy and human rights.

4. Format and Participants

The event will be virtual and will be broadcast live on RMDDH's digital platforms. The event will bring together human rights defenders, state entities responsible for safeguarding human rights in Mozambique and cooperation partners.

5. Venue, Date, and Time

The event will be virtual on December 9, 2024, starting at 8:30 AM.

6. Program

Monday, December 9, 2024

08:30 – 09:00 Arrival and Registration of Participants – RMDDH Secretariat
09:00 – 09:10 Context and Welcome Notes

- President of RMDDH and SouthernDefenders – Prof. Adriano Nuvunga

09:10 – 09:50 Opening Remarks

- Dr. Ana Mesquita - **Coordinator of the United Nations Human Rights Office in Mozambique**
- Dr. Elsbeth Akkerman - **Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Mozambique**
- Dr. Anna-Kaisa Heikkinen - **Ambassador of Finland to Mozambique**
- Honorable Justice Adelino Muchanga - **President of the Supreme Court of Mozambique**

09:50 – 10:00 Official Opening

- **Minister of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs** – Her Excellency Helena Mateus Kida

10:00 – 10:10 Celebration Moment: Symbolic tribute to HRDs for their transformative role in society

10:10 – 10:30 **Family Photo, Networking & Coffee Break**

Panel I

10:30 – 11:20 **The Role of Human Rights Defenders in the Context of Mozambique's Crisis**

Objective: Examine the challenges faced by HRDs in the context of the political and human rights crisis in Mozambique, including state repression and the growing need for victim support.

- His Excellency Albachir Massacar – **President of the National Human Rights Commission**
- Josina Machel – **Human Rights Defender**
- Dr. Roberto Paulo – **Executive Director of LAMBDA**

- Dr. Benilde Nhalevilo – **Executive Director of ROSC**

Moderator: Osman Cossing – Program Coordinator at IMD

Panel II

11:20 – 12:10 Resilience and Legitimacy: Strengthening Human Rights Defenders

Objective: Discuss strategies to reinforce HRDs’ resilience, promote their legitimacy with the state and society, and strengthen support networks.

- Dr. Paula Monjane – **Executive Director of CESC**
- Prof. José Macuane – **Human Rights Defender**
- Dr. Ivete Mafundza – **Human Rights Officer at the United Nations Human Rights Office in Mozambique**
- Dr. João Nhampossa – **Human Rights Lawyer**

Moderator: Nzira de Deus – Executive Director of Fórum Mulher

12:10 – 12:20 Final Considerations and Symbolic Presentation of a Recognition Document to HRDs Present

- Prof. Adriano Nuvunga – **President of RMDDH and SouthernDefenders**

12:20 – 12:30 Cultural Moment and Lunch

- **Cultural Group from the Lambda Association**

