



REDE MOCAMBICANA DOS
DEFENSORES DE DIREITOS HUMANOS
RMDDH

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BRIC project strengthens resilience, inclusion and capacities of human rights defenders

- The Mozambique Human Rights Defenders Network (RMDDH) and the Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (Southern Defenders), with the support of the European Union (EU), held the inaugural conference of the Project “Building Resilience, Inclusion and Capacity of Human Rights Defenders (BRIC)”, in Maputo City, on 13rd July.





The event took place in the Montebelo Indy Maputo Congress Hotel conference room and was attended by civil society representatives, human rights defenders, journalists, government representatives and cooperation partners.

Among the participants, we highlight the Deputy Minister of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs, Filimão Suaze, the Am-

bassador of the European Union Delegation, Anónimo Sánchez-Benedido Gaspar, the Ombudsman, Isac Chande, the President of the Commission of Constitutional Affairs, Human Rights and Legality of the Assembly of the Republic, António Boene, the President of Southern Defenders, Arnold Tsunga, and the Director of Southern Defenders, Washington Katema.



Filimão Suaze, Prof. Adriano Nuvunga and António Gaspar



Isac Chande



Washington Katema



João Nhampossa

The event aimed to present the BRIC project to human rights defenders in Mozambique and to the general public. This is a strategic initiative to strengthen the capacities, inclusion and resilience of human rights defenders in Mozambique.

Funded by the European Union, the BRIC project aims to boost public confidence and acceptance of human rights defenders as legitimate development partners of Mozambique, including in the dialogue to resolve the conflict in Cabo Delgado province.

BRIC fits in with RMDDH's objective of strengthening the capacities and resilience of human rights defenders, as well as improving protection and security as part of their mission to promote and defend human rights. The official launch of the project was done by RMDDH President, Prof. Adriano Nuvunga, and its presentation was done by Southern Defenders Director, Washington Katema.

The ceremony included the presentation, by the Human Rights lawyer, João Nhampossa, of the Report on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders for the year 2021.⁷



Prof. Adriano Nuvunga

The report prepared by RMDDH ascertained, on the one hand, the main features of the Mozambican civic space and security for human rights defenders and journalists in 2021, and on the other hand, their needs within their activities to protect human dignity and pre-

vent the closing of the civic space. See the full report at: <https://redemoz-defensoresdireitoshumanos.org/relatorio-sobre-a-situacao-dos-defensores-de-direitos-humanos-em-mocambique-referente-ao-ano-de-2021-2/>.

The Government recognizes the importance of strengthening the security, promotion and protection of human rights defenders



Filimão Suaze, Deputy Minister for Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs

In his official opening remarks, the Deputy Minister of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs, Filimão Suaze, praised the holding of the inaugural conference of the BRIC project and said that it provides a platform for dialogue to strengthen the security, promotion and protection of human rights defenders in Mo-

zambique. "I could not fail to express our sincere thanks to RMDDH and Southern Defenders for organizing the inaugural conference, with the support of the European Union. This event provides a platform for dialogue to strengthen the security, promotion and protection of human rights defenders," said Filimão Suaze.

European Union states that work of human rights defenders is so crucial to protect human rights



António Sánchez-Benedido Gaspar, Ambassador of the European Union to Mozambique

The Ambassador of the European Union Delegation in Mozambique, António Sánchez-Benedido Gaspar, expressed his recognition and admiration for the work of all human rights defenders and stressed that the European Union supports RMDDH and Southern Defenders in the implementation of the BRIC project. “I want to take this opportunity to express my personal and European Union recognition and admiration for the work of all human rights defenders that is so fundamental to establish partnerships to better protect the human rights of all Mozambicans. In this specific case, the partnership is the result of

a joint work between RMDDH and Southern Defenders (with the European Union)”, said António Sánchez-Benedido Gaspar.

The ambassador explained that the BRIC project is a real response from the European Union, taking into account the context of Mozambique in which situations of human rights violations have been recorded, particularly as a result of the conflict in Cabo Delgado. “We are proud that this project includes the installation of an RMDDH office in Pemba to enable rapid and effective action at the time when these situations occur,” added António Sánchez-Benedido Gaspar.

Parliament looks to BRIC project as strategy to strengthen capacities, inclusion and resilience of human rights defenders



António Boene, President of the Commission for Constitutional Affairs, Human Rights and Legality of the Assembly of the Republic

Also as opening remarks, the President of the Commission for Constitutional Affairs, Human Rights and Legality of the Assembly of the Republic, António Boene, congratulated RMDDH and Southern Defenders for organizing the event and highlighted that the BRIC project has noble objectives.

“It is a strategy for action by human rights defenders in their mission to defend and promote human rights. The BRIC project is a strategy to strengthen the capacities, inclusion and resilience of human rights defenders, so its goals are noble,” said Antonio Boene.

“RMDDH has already achieved measurable and demonstrable results in its short life”, Arnold Tsunga



Arnold Tsunga, Presidente da Southern Defenders

“RMDDH has already achieved measurable and demonstrable results in its short lifetime, including impact litigation for public financial integrity and accountability,” he said in opening remarks.

Arnold Tsunga noted that RMDDH has established an infrastructure for the systematic and sustained advocacy of human rights defenders and working offices in conflict zones, such as in Cabo Delgado.

For the President of Southern Defenders, the BRIC project should increase local solidarity, collective protection, increased awareness of human rights defenders, including those who do not identify themselves as human rights defenders. “I also like RMDDH’s approach.

They are tenacious in advocating for human rights defenders, but they also work collaboratively with duty bearers at the domestic, regional and international levels,” said Arnold Tsunga.

“RMDDH also works seamlessly with common grassroots actors, just as they do with the political community. I want to welcome their cooperative relationship with the National Human Rights Commission and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR),” said Arnold Tsunga, adding that he hopes that he will see effective cooperation with key actors in the administration of justice to address the phenomenon of judicial persecution of human rights defenders.

“The Rulers don’t know what human rights are”, Alice Mabota



Alice Mabota



Quitéria Guirengane



Custódio Duma



Prof. Ernesto Nhanale

During the inaugural conference, there was space for a debate on the situation of human rights defenders, in a panel that included Alice Mabota, Custódio Duma, Quitéria Guirengane and Prof. Ernesto Nhanale. After highlighting the importance of promoting resilience, inclusion and capacities of human rights defenders through RMDDH, Alice Mabota said that Mozambican rulers do not have a grasp on what human rights are. “The rulers don’t know what human rights are and they don’t want to know it. The rulers only recognize human rights when they are taken away from them.”

Alice Mabota also said that there is a need to build resilience, inclusion, and capacity based on an instrument that clearly specifies who human rights defenders are to avoid situations of non-recognition of those who defend other people’s rights.

On this point, Quitéria Guirengane argued that it is important to reflect on this instru-

ment, taking into account the risks that it can mean for human rights defenders. For Quitéria Guirengane, an instrument that defines who are human rights defenders, their rights and obligations can limit the rights to freedoms and contribute to the closing of the civic space. “It is important to reflect on how to strengthen the data collection system and create a rapid response mechanism to protect human rights defenders at risk.

“Custódio Duma does not agree with the idea of defining who is a human rights defender. His justification is simple: “we are all human rights defenders”. The lawyer believes that the idea of defining who are human rights defenders can exclude people who defend values inherent to the human person and guarantee some privilege to certain groups.

For Custódio Duma, human rights defenders are all people, because it is part of human nature to rise up against any oppression and fight for freedoms. Duma suggests the

creation of principles or protective rules for human rights defenders that are compatible with the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique (CRM).

Prof. Ernesto Nhanale, meanwhile, noted that human rights defenders in Mozambique

are being watched. “The digital spaces are being used to watch us. Information technologies leave us vulnerable. The big struggle is that the people who represent us want to govern at their pleasure, as if the State belongs to them”.





CONSTRUINDO RESILIÊNCIA, INCLUSÃO E CAPACIDADE DOS DEFENSORES DE DIREITOS HUMANOS (BRIC)

MONTEBELO INDY
MAPUTO CONGRESS HOTEL

DIA 13 DE JULHO DE 2022
14H00 – 17H00

NOTAS DE ABERTURA



Dra. Helena Mateus Kida
Ministra da Justiça, Assuntos
Constitucionais e Religiosos



Dr. António Sánchez-Benedito Gaspar
Embaixador da Delegação da
União Europeia



Dr. António Boene
Presidente da Comissão dos
Assuntos Constitucionais, Direitos
Humanos e de Legalidade da A.R



Dr. Luís Bitone
Presidente da Comissão
Nacional dos Direitos Humanos

ORADORES



Dr. Arnold Tsunga
Presidente da Southern
Defenders



Dr. Custódio Duma
Defensor de Direitos
Humanos



Dr. Washington Katema
Director da Southern
Defenders



Dr. João Nhampossa
Advogado de Direitos
Humanos

COMENTÁRIOS



Prof. Adriano Nuvunga
Chairperson da RMDDH

MODERADOR



Dra. Alice Mabota
Defensora de Direitos
Humanos



Prof. Ernesto Nhanale
Defensor de Direitos
Humanos



Quitéria Guirengane
Defensora de Direitos
Humanos





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