



REDE MOCAMBICANA DOS
DEFENSORES DE DIREITOS HUMANOS

RMDDH

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FILIFE NYUSI ONCE AGAIN, ATTACKS CRITICS

It's not murmurings, Mr. President, it's citizenship!



Since coming to power in 2015, he has never hidden his aversion to criticism. The atmosphere of terror and fear that he installed in the Government and in his party, where, for the first time in Frelimo's history, 100% votes are reported, is the most visible face of his intolerance to difference.

But on the current 11th of November, Filipe Nyusi made the most violent attacks against critics of his governance and even officials of his own Government. In a speech lasting 46 minutes and 28 seconds, the President of the Republic made it clear that, after all, for him, constructive criticism is nothing more than

what he calls murmurs, noise, or even jokes from people sitting in offices. The CDD warns of the risk that the populist and irresponsible pronouncements of the State's highest leader may lead to more hostility from those who think differently,

The President of the Republic was speaking at the closing ceremony of the academic year at the Higher Institute of Defense Studies Lieutenant-General Armando Emílio Guebuza (ISEDEF), which coincided with the graduation of new staff. In his characteristic style, of a President who takes advantage of public events to send messages to critics of his governance, which is far from responding to the desires of Mozambicans, Filipe Nyusi did not precisely define his target audience. On the contrary, he fired at everything and everyone, including civil servants who, amid all kinds of shortages, keep the Nyusi Government standing.

For example, he dismissed all criticism of the State's failure to combat violent extremism in northern Mozambique, including the violation of human rights by some agents of the Defense and Security Forces (FDS). But, in this respect, his starting point was the famous statement that the political-military situation in Mozambique, including in Cabo Delgado, is stable, which was promptly refuted by the press, which closely follows events in the north of the country.

"(...) this stability (...) is, above all, the result of the courage, courage, and tenacity of the Mozambicans who are in the ranks of the Defense and Security Forces (...). They are there working, we are here talking, mumbling, asking a lot, they are there doing a lot so that we can murmur. They are young, they are very small, huh", said the President of the Republic. More than reducing criticism of the conflict in northern Mozambique to murmurs, Filipe Nyusi was aware that his statement could go down badly in public opinion, due to the constant worsening of instability in Cabo Del-

gado. So, he tried to justify himself.

"Whom are you going to tell, the President said that, but we heard that Namuno, I don't know what. But who said it won't (be attacked)? No one ever got up and we said, at the Machava Stadium, that, as of today, the war is over. How do you do that with terrorism? What we are saying is that we are ready to go where he goes. Let's continue (...)", he needed.

The President did not spare the DDR critics, as the process of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of former Renamo guerrillas are known.

"(...) Renamo guerrillas (who) are not manipulated (...). The important thing is that Renamo and the Government concluded that we must work for pensions. This is important. Now, as we do, we are doing it together, and there is no one who distracts people, by saying that someone doesn't want to. Which will be you referring to? If we provoked it, I went to Gorongosa to talk to Dhlakama (Afonso Dhlakama, the historic leader of Renamo), that this process will go like this, in stages. You are not discovering anything new. Have you ever thought about or talked about pensions in your life? Now someone is saying that this is the way, (but you) then want to block it with murmurs", he fired.

It was at the same ceremony that Filipe Nyusi devalued the criticisms of the CDD¹ on the serious violation of the principle of separation of powers that the President is committing by granting pardons to alleged terrorists, since, under the terms of the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique (CRM), the Head of State is responsible for pardoning and commuting sentences and the Assembly of the Republic is responsible for granting amnesty and forgiveness of sentences. On the ISEDEF podium, instead of bringing legal arguments, the President limited himself to what he called "deconstructing this narrative of people

¹ <https://cddmoz.org/nyusi-desvaloriza-criticas-do-cdd-e-volta-a-perdoar-dezenas-de-supostos-terroristas-em-claro-desrespeito-a-constituicao-2/>

who are in offices saying that we are interfering with rights, I know what, that this is the message of justice, that they should make amnesty (...)"'. And, to substantiate his contempt for criticism and the Constitution of the Republic, he again pardoned, a few days later, in Nampula, dozens of suspected terrorists².

The President considers the criticism of the illegal granting of pardons to alleged ter-

rorists as "jokes" and asked: "What are you talking about? They made these jokes when we told them to sleep at 8:00 pm, because of COVID-19, that this violated the Constitution. They preferred that we would all die. We have died, to date, 2.218. No one has died from COVID-19 in six months. But this death of two thousand was a daily death, here in South Africa and in the world (...)"'.

President may disagree, but responsibly

The CDD warns of the risk that these and other populist and irresponsible pronouncements by the highest leader of Mozambique may lead to increased harassment of those who think differently, including activists and human rights defenders who do nothing but exercise citizenship, a fundamental right in a democracy. Even if the President does not agree with certain positions, which is normal in democracies, it is crucial that he maintains the posture of the Head of State, making comments and giving answers in a responsible way, and not as any ordinary citizen.

The President, therefore, has the right to disagree, but this must be done within a framework commensurate with the duties he performs. Incidentally, that is also why he is President of the Republic. Responsibly disagreeing is different from devaluing criticism,

leaving tacit appeals to abdicate citizenship, and calling for adherence to unanimism. In the case of these populist pronouncements by the President, the risk of them leading to more hostility from critics and opponents is even more serious considering the location and target audience to which he was addressed: the military class.

In military discipline, the words of the Commander-in-Chief, as he is, by virtue of his duties, the President of the Republic, are not simple comments, like that of any citizen or the Government propagandists who all the time launch attacks against anyone who criticizes the governance of Nyusi and Frelimo. For the military, the Commander-in-Chief's pronouncements are like orders that must be implemented by those who, in Mozambique, have been at the forefront of human rights violations.

Attack on public officials

But it is not just the "apostles of doom" or "anti-patriots", as government propaganda usually dubs critics of Frelimo governance, that the President attacked on 11 November. Those who, facing all the needs, keep the Government standing, also did not escape. Nyusi made it clear that he would like civil servants not to complain, on the contrary, to thank themselves and their government for the "fa-

vor" they do to officials. And, here, the motto would be none other than the controversial Single Salary Table (TSU), whose inconsistencies and injustices continue to threaten the paralysis of some key sectors such as health and education.

And it was particularly to the teachers that the President addressed incisively. "(...) we are working on the Single Salary Table. It is an

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initiative that we brought (sarcastic laughter) because we saw that the country is unbalanced in terms of social inclusion. And nobody told us, nobody sent us, and nobody asked us, nobody called us on strike to do this work. Now that the result is out, help this concept, this initiative, and this desire to succeed. A teacher who had 15,000, now the table has 40 – well, it's not much, because we wanted more, but that people don't show up wanting it (...) (...) but you get confused - «I won't eat anymore, I won't drink water because I'm already 15 and now I'm 40, but I won't eat because I should be 100».

In addition to the appeals to “eat” and “drink water”, which went viral on social media, the President used the term “hang” for public officials. “I want to ask those people who like to have 100 and others 10 - when we pull you to 110 and another enters to 60 - don't hang yourself,” he said, to applause from the military. As a matter of fact, the President had a different approach to them: first, he guaranteed that everything will be done so that there are no glaring imbalances, moreover, unequal treatment in the same civil service; and, second, that they are “good boys,” because they never rebel against the Government.

“I say this here why? It's simple, I want to thank my soldiers, my comrade friends, I was forged in this house (...). They are in the trenches, and their concern when the day comes is (if) something has leaked into the families that are here in Maputo or are there in Niasa, are there in Lichinga. When it doesn't drip, because you don't know how the families are going to live and when it will come back – that's a concern. Those are the ones who should be telling me (...), but we are sure that they will never be left behind. We are going to fix something that fails, that is, the police, the military, etc., and we will work so that the-

se things do not happen in an unbalanced way because I am very sensitive to this. But even so, they don't even look, they don't get up, they don't leave the field, they're chasing the terrorist wherever he goes, while we are shouting from the televisions: «hoho hoho hoho». You, we want to solve your problem. Help there to solve the problem, do not complicate us. Who says we don't want to solve the teacher's problem here (...)?»

Then he targeted officials from the Ministry of Economy and Finance, who also spoke out against the so-called TSU. “When I was in Egypt (...) in my large delegation that accompanied me, there were financiers there, they said, “where do you work?” “Economics and Finance”. «Ah, you are the ones who are going out to the street for that march». «Ah, we are here, we were not there». I said, you guys, instead of crying, do a good job there because you're the ones who were working to make a difference. Now, you fail and then you go out on the street «me, me, me». Go sit there to make the table because the employee is waiting for you to correct what is wrong. It's not your screaming. (...) don't try to complicate things”, he said.

The CDD understands that these responses by Nyusi to the outcry of civil servants also do not dignify a President of the Republic who, in this case, should have the attitude of a father who, in the face of conflicts in the family, should be the conciliator of positions. In addition to being disrespectful to State officials and agents, among them anonymous heroes who, even amid immense difficulties and meager salaries, ensure the provision of public services, Nyusi's pronouncements can discourage those who ensure the provision of these essential services, especially for the needy families, who are totally dependent on the State for access to health and education and other fundamental rights.



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