



RESILIENCE AND LEGITIMACY OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AMID 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 heightened significance in 2024, against the backdrop of Mozambique's grave political and human rights crisis. The uncertainty surrounding the general elections of October 9, 2024—marked by allegations of electoral fraud—and the repression of peaceful demonstrations have laid bare an alarming scenario of fundamental rights violations. These events have resulted in over 100 deaths, hundreds of injuries, and arbitrary detentions nationwide.

In this challenging context, Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) play an essential yet high-risk role. They are often the first responders, providing legal, physical, social, and psychological support to victims of violence, despite facing direct threats to their safety and well-being. However, the critical impact of their work is frequently undermined by challenges to their legitimacy, often stemming from misconceptions among institutions and sectors of society, which may perceive them as adversaries rather than partners in promoting a fairer and more inclusive society.

This event, therefore, goes beyond mere celebration. It seeks to recognize and honor the courage and resilience of HRDs while strengthening their capacities and legitimizing their indispensable role in advocating for fundamental rights. Additionally, the occasion 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.

This day reaffirms a commitment to 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 amid 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;
2. Promote discussions on strategies to enhance HRDs' resilience and amplify their legitimacy within society and the state;
3. Facilitate the exchange of experiences among HRDs and strengthen solidarity and mutual support networks

3. Expected Outcomes

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

4. Format and Participants

The event will be virtual, with live streaming on RMDDH digital platforms, bringing together Human Rights Defenders, state bodies responsible for safeguarding HRDs' rights in Mozambique, and cooperation partners.

5. Venue, Date, and Time

The virtual event will be held on December 9, 2024, from 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM.

6. Program

Monday, December 9, 2024

08:30 – 09:00: Participant Registration – RMDDH Secretariat

09:00 – 09:10: Welcome Remarks

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

09:10 – 09:30: Family Photo & Coffee Break

09:30 – 09:50: Opening Remarks and Facilitation

- Dr. Ana Mesquita – **Coordinator, UN Office for Human Rights in Mozambique (Opening Remarks)**
- Dr. João Nhampossa – **Human Rights Lawyer (Context and Facilitation)**

09:50 – 10:50: Recognizing HRDs' Roles: Promoting Resilience and Legitimacy Amid Political and Social Challenges

- **Testimonies from Nikotina KF and Clemente Carlos (Debate)**

10:50 – 11:20: HRDs' Impact on Supporting Victims of Human Rights Violations in the Current Crisis

- **RMDDH Provincial Coordinators**

11:20 – 11:40: The Role of HRDs Amid Crisis

- H.E. Albachir Massacar – **President, National Human Rights Commission**
- Dr. Benilde Nhalevilo – **Executive Director, ROSC**

11:40 – 11:50: Cultural Moment

- Neide Sigaúque

11:50 – 12:00: Closing Remarks

- Dr. João Nhampossa – **Human Rights Lawyer**



Kingdom of the Netherlands

