



REDE MOÇAMBICANA DOS
DEFENSORES DE DIREITOS HUMANOS

RMDDH



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AFRICAN DEFENDERS LEADERS SUMMIT 2025 HELD IN MAPUTO WITH A FOCUS ON THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

International event highlights the resilience, courage, and legacy of human rights defenders across Africa

- Maputo hosted, on June 11 and 12, 2025, the historic edition of the African Defenders Leaders Summit, held for the first time in Mozambique. Organized by African Defenders, in partnership with the Mozambican Network of Human Rights Defenders (RMDDH), the summit brought together African leaders, civil society organizations, journalists, and human rights defenders from across the continent, at a critical moment for rights and fundamental freedoms in Africa.



The event aimed to reflect on regional contexts and reinforce pan-African cooperation amid growing threats to democracy, the rule of law, and freedom of expression. The summit thus became a strategic platform for sharing experiences, strengthening networks, and building common protection strategies.

Honoring Those Who Give Voice to Justice

The closing ceremony was marked by an emotional tribute to defenders who have demonstrated unwavering commitment to human dignity. The opening session was led by Professor Adriano Nuvunga, President of RMDDH and Chair of the African Defenders Coordinating Committee, who emphasized the importance of publicly recognizing

those who have been silenced while standing at the forefront of the struggle for rights and justice.

The awards ceremony included the presence of distinguished figures such as Hassan Shire, President of African Defenders, who reaffirmed his unconditional support to the families of defenders who lost their lives in the pursuit of justice.



The following awards were presented:

FRONTLINE JOURNALISM COURAGE AWARD

Awarded to journalist **Sheila Wilson**, for her courageous work in exposing human rights violations in Mozambique. Her determination, even under threat, has become a symbol of press freedom and the right to information.



CHAMPION OF DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

Presented to human rights defender **Dr. Paula Monjane**, for her transformative role in promoting democratic governance and the rule of law in Mozambique.



VOICE OF THE VOICELESS AWARD (IN MEMORIAM)

Awarded posthumously to defender **Albino Sibiac Mano Shottas**, in recognition of his powerful digital activism against police brutality and social injustice.



GUARDIAN OF JUSTICE AWARD (IN MEMORIAM)

Bestowed posthumously on lawyer and defender Dr. Elvino Bernardo António Dias, whose tireless legal advocacy for justice and the rule of law remains an ethical legacy and inspiration.



A Silent but Immortal Struggle

The posthumous tributes to Elvino Dias and Mano Shottas highlighted the extreme cost faced by defenders operating in a context of rising repression, where assassination has become one of the most brutal methods of silencing dissent.

More than symbolic recognition, the awards represent a collective commitment to African solidarity, civic resistance, and social transformation,

grounded in the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

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Almejamos um país livre e seguro para os Defensores dos Direitos Humanos, um ambiente favorável ao desenvolvimento das comunidades e ao envolvimento da juventude como potenciais Defensores dos Direitos Humanos.

We aspire to a nation where Human Rights defenders can operate freely and securely, fostering community development and empowering youth to become effective advocates for Human Rights.

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