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## **Mozambique police must only use live ammunition to protect life during demonstrations**

Amnesty International today urged Mozambique's police not to use live ammunition to disperse violent demonstrations in the capital Maputo unless lives are at risk.

According to media reports at least six people, including two children, have been killed during clashes between police and demonstrators protesting the rising price of commodities in the country. The protests are continuing across the city.

"While we recognize that the police are trying to contain a violent protest, live ammunition - which amounts to lethal force - should not be used except when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life," said Muluka-Anne Miti, Amnesty International's Mozambique researcher.

Amnesty International calls on the Mozambique police authorities to ensure that police have non-lethal means of force at their disposal to control the situation and disperse the demonstrators.

A text message has been circulating in Maputo encouraging demonstrators to continue their protests till Friday, according to information obtained by Amnesty International.

According to a recent Amnesty International report at least 46 people were unlawfully killed by the police in Mozambique between January 2006 and the end of 2009.

"The government must conduct an impartial and independent investigation in the circumstances surrounding today's deaths and if people were killed unlawfully prosecute those responsible," said Muluka-Anne Miti.

Despite repeated requests, the authorities have provided Amnesty International with very little information into investigations into police killings in Mozambique, including during visits to the country.

In some cases, Amnesty International was told that investigations were not carried out because the killing was presumed to be lawful.

International standards require an effective investigation be carried out into all cases of death or serious injury as a result of use of force or firearms by the police.

Notes to editors:

- On 5 February 2008, Mozambican police shot at people demonstrating against increased transport fares in the city of Maputo, killing at least three and injuring 30 with stray bullets. Related demonstrations took place

in the provinces of Inhambane and Gaza on 11 February, during which the police also fired live ammunition into crowds. A police spokesperson said that live ammunition was used because some officers were “caught by surprise” by the demonstrators.