

URGENT ACTION

WOMAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER FACING THREATS ONLINE

Woman human rights defender Fátima Mimbire has been receiving intimidating messages on social media from unknown people since 18 January. These threats began after she took up an active role in the Centre for Public Integrity's (CIP) campaign against the Mozambique government seeking to repay loans it acquired illegally and secretly. There has also been a smear campaign aimed at Fátima on social media in an attempt to further intimidate her and delegitimize her work.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Filipe Jacinto Nyusi
 President of the Republic of Mozambique
 Avenida Julius Nyerere, PABX 2000
 Maputo – Mozambique
 Facebook: @NyusiConfioemti, Twitter @FNyusi

Your Excellency Filipe Jacinto Nyusi,

On 18 January, woman human rights defender Fátima Mimbire began to receive intimidating messages and death threats on social media. The attacks began on the same day the Centre for Public Integrity (CIP) launched a campaign denouncing a move by the Mozambican government seeking to repay loans it secretly acquired to set up three state-owned companies: Proindicus, Ematum (Mozambique Tuna Company) and Mozambique Asset Management. Fátima works at CIP and has actively been involved in the campaign.

There has also been a smear campaign on social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp to delegitimize her and her work. One of the Facebook's post said "CIP is instigating and promoting tension between the State and the Mozambican society. Take care of Fatima Mimbire." Another Facebook user said, "Fatima Mimbire should feel shame of your attitude. She is sexually used by American and Portuguese people to earn money and still shows on social media to destabilize the country. Why don't you take care of your family that needs you? You should enjoy your life while you still alive".

CIP has been distributing T-shirts to the public brandishing the message "I won't pay for hidden debts". From 21 to 24 January, the Police of the Republic of Mozambique (PRM) surrounded CIP's office in Maputo and ordered people to remove the T-shirts which they then confiscated. They also ordered CIP to stop distributing the T-shirts.

Amnesty International is concerned that the online intimidation and smear campaign against Fátima Mimbire is solely because of her work as a woman human rights defender and the peaceful exercise of her right to freedom of expression.

I call on you:

- To ensure the authorities promptly investigate in an independent and impartial manner the threats and intimidation against Fátima Mimbire;
- To ensure that Fátima Mimbire and other CIP employees are provided with adequate protection, in accordance to their wishes, so that they can continue their work freely without fear of reprisals;
- To ensure that the right to freedom of expression is respected and protected in Mozambique.

Yours sincerely,

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Between 2013 and 2014, the Mozambican Government obtained loans of over two billion dollars without parliamentary approval to set up three state-owned companies: Proindicus, Mozambique Tuna Company (Ematum) and Mozambique Asset Management (MAM). The loans were arranged by Credit Suisse and a Russian investment bank. The discovery of these secret loans in 2016 led the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and international donors to halt financial support to Mozambique resulting in the collapse of its economy.

CIP is an independent civil society organization that has taken a firm stance against corruption, lack of accountability and transparency in both public and private sectors. CIP has been at the forefront of providing public information on the implications and significance of these illegally and secretly acquired loans. CIP has been using social media to provide frequent updates on the trial of Mr. Manuel Chang, the former Mozambique Finance Minister who signed the loans. CIP translated into Portuguese the indictment issued by the New York Eastern District Court, which accuses several public officials of defrauding investors by secretly negotiating illegal loans on behalf of the Mozambican state.

On 25 January, the Political Committee of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), the ruling party, in a press release called on the general public to remain vigilant of behavior leading to “incitement against public order and tranquility”. This appeal can increase the risks for human rights defenders who have spoken publicly against corruption.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Portuguese

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 12 03 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Fátima Mimbire (She/Her)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: None