

URGENT ACTION

POISONING OF JOURNALIST MUST BE INVESTIGATED

On 27 July, journalist Selma Inocência Marivate reported to Amnesty International that she suspects she may have been poisoned with heavy metals during a work trip to Maputo, Mozambique's capital, in March 2025. Shortly after returning to Germany, where she currently lives and works, she became very unwell and later tested positive for heavy metal substances in medically inexplicable concentrations. Selma Inocência Marivate is in a critical state as she undergoes intensive treatment to clear her blood of the toxic metals. Amnesty International calls on the Mozambican authorities to urgently investigate the suspected poisoning and publicly condemn attacks against journalists.

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

Prosecutor General of the Republic

Américo Julião Letela
Av. Vladimir Lenine nr. 121
Maputo, Mozambique
Email denuncias@pgr.gov.mz

Dear Prosecutor General,

I am writing to express deep concern for Mozambican journalist **Selma Inocência Marivate**, 42, who on 27 July reported that she may have been the victim of a toxic metal poisoning during a work visit to Maputo, Mozambique in March 2025.

On 2 March, Selma Inocência Marivate travelled from Germany, where she resides and works, to Maputo to facilitate a one-week training for local journalists. While still in Mozambique, she reported sensing that her safety may have been compromised, prompting her to leave the country on 6 March, earlier than planned. Shortly after returning to Germany, she began experiencing serious health issues, including fatigue, muscle weakness, nausea, kidney pain and loss of balance. After several inconclusive tests, a toxicological analysis carried out in Berlin confirmed heavy metal intoxication, including mercury, cadmium, uranium and thallium, some found in dangerously high concentrations. Medical reports described the presence of certain substances as being in "physiologically inexplicable concentrations". Selma Inocência Marivate is currently undergoing chelation therapy, the standard treatment for acute or chronic heavy metal poisoning. She remains in a critical situation, unable to work or pursue her studies. Her case has been reported to German police, but as it is most likely that the suspected poisoning took place in Mozambique, the Mozambican authorities must urgently investigate the case.

Selma Inocência Marivate's suspected poisoning took place during a politically tense period in Mozambique, marked by post-electoral protests and a pattern of threats and violence against critics. Selma Inocência Marivate has been an outspoken voice against the human rights abuses that took place between October 2024 and February 2025, when nearly 400 people were reportedly killed in Mozambique during protests. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated case. In December 2024, Mozambican activist Wilker Dias, coordinator of the DECIDE Platform, also reported suspected poisoning in Maputo, supported by lab evidence. He too had travelled to the city for one week to attend various public events. Despite public appeals, no investigation was conducted.

I urge you to ensure a prompt, independent and impartial investigation into the suspected poisoning of Selma Inocência Marivate is carried out, with a view to hold those responsible to account. I further urge you to publicly condemn any attacks or threats against journalists and human rights defenders in Mozambique, ensuring that press freedoms and more broadly the right to freedom of expression is respected and protected.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In the aftermath of Mozambique's October 2024 general elections, the country experienced an unprecedented wave of protests to contest election results and other socioeconomic and political grievances, which were met with unlawful and excessive use of force by security forces. The violent crackdown reportedly resulted in the death of nearly 400 people, while thousands more were injured or subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention. [An investigation](#) by Amnesty International found that security forces acted in violation of international human rights law and standards, inflicting harm on not only protesters but also bystanders. During and after this period of heightened tension, opposition members and journalists were particularly targeted.

In January 2025, journalist and opposition member Arlindo Chissale, 46, was forcibly disappeared. He has not been seen since 7 January 2025. Witnesses told his family that they saw him being pulled from a public minibus, beaten, and taken away by individuals believed to be members of the defence and security forces. Amnesty International [called for an investigation](#) into his disappearance, to date there has been no response from the Mozambican authorities.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Portuguese

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 30 JANUARY 2026

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

NAME AND PRONOUN: Selma Inocência Marivate (She/her)