



# VPSHR IN MOZAMBIQUE BULLETIN

VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES  
SECURITY  
AND HUMAN RIGHTS

PLATFORM FOR DIALOGUE ON BUSINESS, SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN CABO DELGADO



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## Government and Civil Society Representatives trained in Human Rights and Voluntary Principles



On 15 April, in Maputo City, representatives of the Government and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) participated in a workshop organized by the Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CDD), in partnership with the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs (MJACR) and the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF),

focusing on Human Rights and the Voluntary Principles on Security. The workshop aimed to provide government officials and representatives of Civil Society Organisations with a deeper understanding of Human Rights and the Voluntary Principles, particularly the national and international instruments that underpin this initiative.

Prof. Adriano Nuvunga, Executive Director of the Center for Democracy and Human Rights (CDD), explained during his speech that the work on the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights intersects with the extractive industry and the impact of operations on human rights. He highlighted the complexity faced by natural resource extraction companies in seeking security and respect for human rights in their sites of operation.

He explained that this is not just a question of rights, but also of human dignity, stating that companies in the extractive sector must respect the right to development, as it is a question of human dignity. He highlighted the responsibility of both the government and the business sector to respect human rights, also emphasizing the importance of community development. In the context of human rights and business, profits and revenues must also contribute to community development. "This platform is not limited to formal solutions, nor does it have the sole purpose of raising awareness of human rights. It also focuses on the need to promote community development."

For Prof. Adriano Nuvunga, there can be no dignity if people do not have access to food; There can be no dignity if people, especially those living in communities affected by the extractive sector, do not have freedom of movement, do not have air to breathe and do not receive adequate compensation when their lands are expropriated. "This is only possible when we have legislation that ensures that companies operate in a context where the rights of communities are met and respected. Consequently, it is essential to consider the "social license to operate" granted by communities and the willingness of these communities to permit companies to conduct their activities.

In response to this demand, the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPs) were created to guide interactions between the various stakeholders involved, including businesses, governments and civil society. Prof. Nuvunga stressed that the VPs are not limited to identifying and mitigating risks of human rights abuses, but also aim to promote the inclusion of local communities in security-related decision-making. In particular, he highlighted the transformative potential of these principles in regions such as Cabo Delgado, where the presence of



Prof. Adriano Nuvunga, Executive Director of the Center for Democracy and Human Rights (CDD)

the extractive industry often triggers conflicts. He stressed that effective implementation of the VPs could represent a significant opportunity to resolve tensions and create an environment of peace and prosperity in the region.

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Angelo Paunde, National Director for Human Rights and Citizenship at the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs, announced that in 2024, Mozambique reached an important milestone by being accepted as a participating government in the International Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI). “This milestone enhances the country’s commitment to human rights and opens access to international best practices, technical cooperation, and institutional credibility.”

Angelo Paunde explained that, through the Voluntary Principles, there is an opportunity to ensure that security operations — public or private — are aligned with the principles of the rule of law, respecting human dignity and protecting fundamental rights, especially in areas of natural resource exploitation.

However, he highlighted that this path presents significant challenges. Among them, the complexity of the context in Cabo Delgado, where the risks of human rights violations by security forces or private actors are constantly present, requires coordinated actions, rigorous monitoring and effective accountability. In addition, he referred to the weaknesses in the regulation and supervision of private security companies, which often operate without clear guidelines on conduct compatible with human rights.

“One challenge is the limited local capacities—technical, human, and financial—for effectively implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the voluntary principles in the most affected areas. Additionally, involving local communities actively is crucial so they serve not just as beneficiaries but also as key participants in dialogue, reporting, and social transformation processes.”



Angelo Paunde, National Director for Human Rights and Citizenship at the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs

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The first part of the training was divided into two sessions, each addressing a specific topic. Gisela Magalhaes, representative of the National Directorate for Human Rights and Citizenship of the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs, presented on the topic “ Human Rights in the Legal System of Mozambique”. During her presentation, Gisela discussed a range of topics, including an introduction to human rights, their position within the national legal framework, their relevance to the extractive industry, as well as methods for monitoring and reporting allegations and violations of human rights.

She emphasized that States hold the primary responsibility for ensuring that all individuals enjoy their human rights. Consequently, human rights impose at least four levels of obligations on States: the obligations to respect, protect, promote, and fulfil. The obligation to respect is essentially a negative duty, requiring the State to refrain from actions that jeopardize individuals. In contrast, the obligations to protect, promote, and fulfil are fundamentally positive duties, necessitating the State to implement legislative, administrative, and other measures to ensure individuals’ enjoyment of their human rights and to safeguard individuals against violations of their rights by third parties.

Additionally, she highlighted that Mozambique has a robust legal framework regarding the extractive industry, which includes rules to protect the rights of communities. However, she emphasized the importance of a comprehensive approach and encouraged participants to share cases of human rights violations to promote awareness and justice. “By sharing cases of human rights violations, we are giving a voice to the marginalized and raising awareness about social justice issues.”



Gisela Magalhaes, representative of the National Directorate for Human Rights and Citizenship of the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs

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Hélio Siteo, Program Officer at the Center for Democracy and Human Rights (CDD), presented an overview of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, highlighting them as an essential tool for companies operating in complex environments, such as Mozambique, where security and human rights issues are common. He stressed that these principles provide crucial guidance for companies to respect human rights while maintaining the security of their operations.

During his speech, Hélio focused on the first pillar of the Voluntary Principles, emphasizing the importance of conducting a comprehensive risk assessment, both for the company and for local communities. “This assessment should be carried out as early as possible and be ongoing, taking into account significant events or changes and based on up-to-date and reliable information, incorporating different perspectives,” said Hélio. This approach highlights the importance of a proactive risk analysis, ensuring that companies are aware of the impacts of their operations and can take appropriate measures to protect the human rights of affected communities.

Hélio continued his presentation by highlighting the relationships between multinational companies and public and private security providers. He stressed the importance of a careful approach in determining the appropriate level of public security required for business operations, balancing security with respect for human rights. Siteo stressed the need to understand the specificities of public security needs in the contexts in which companies operate, conducting a thorough analysis of local conditions and potential security threats to both employees and surrounding communities.

Furthermore, Siteo stressed the importance of carefully selecting professionals hired to provide private security services, ensuring that they are properly trained, respect human rights, and promote a safe and inclusive environment for all parties involved. “A due diligence assessment is essential for an impartial assessment of the risks associated with business operations, both in terms of security and human rights,” he noted. By bringing together representatives from local



Hélio Siteo, Program Officer at the Center for Democracy and Human Rights (CDD)

government, civil society organizations, and experts in the field, the event successfully conveyed human rights principles and the Voluntary Principles to participants, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and ensuring that the impact of the training extends beyond the event itself.

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The second part of the workshop involved group work and practical cases that enabled participants to utilise the knowledge gained in the first part. Scenarios related to the extractive industry and the issues encountered by local communities were created. Each group presented its conclusions and recommendations, which were discussed in plenary, facilitating an exchange of ideas and experiences among attendees.

The workshop was an important step in promo-

ting human rights and strengthening security measures in the extractive sector. By bringing together representatives from the Government and civil society organisations, the event provided participants with an understanding of human rights principles and the Voluntary Principles. Furthermore, active engagement was encouraged and the need for continued efforts to pursue a comprehensive agenda that addresses key human rights and security concerns in Mozambique was emphasised.





**MISSÃO:**

*Inspirar e impulsionar ações para proteger os direitos humanos, fortalecer a democracia e promover a justiça.*

**MISSION:**

*Inspiring and driving actions to protect human rights, strengthen democracy, and promote justice.*



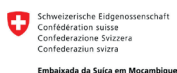
**EDITORIAL INFORMATION**

**Property:** CDD – Democracia e Direitos Humanos  
**Director:** Prof. Adriano Nuvunga  
**Author:** Hélio Siteo  
**Layout:** CDD

**Address:**  
Rua Dar-Es-Salaam Nº 279, Bairro da Sommerschild, Cidade de Maputo.  
Telephone: +258 21 085 797

 CDD\_moz  
**E-mail:** info@cddmoz.org  
**Website:** <http://www.cddmoz.org>

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