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FIVE YEARS ON, SILENCE PERSISTS

No justice for mozambican border agents killed by SANDF

- Five years after the killing of two agents of the Mozambican Republic Police (PRM) assigned to the Border Guard—one of them identified as Benício Lázaro Guirruta—their families remain engulfed in silence from national justice institutions. The incident, which occurred on June 16, 2019, at the Ponta D'Ouro border, involved an armed confrontation between members of the Mozambican Border Guard and soldiers of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). Since then, despite promises of accountability, no findings have been made public or shared with the victims' families.



The most recent communication, dated September 6, 2024, and issued by the Office of the PRM General Commander following a petition to the Ombudsman, confirms that a commission was set up within the Ministry of Interior to investigate the facts and that reports were drafted and submitted to higher authorities. However, one year after that statement—and five years after the events—those reports remain undisclosed, with no concrete information about the outcome of the process.

Laura Carlos Mahulela Guirruta, mother of Benício, one of the victims, has awaited justice ever since. She has made repeated appeals to national authorities for the truth to come out, yet no response has been provided on the progress of the case. The stance of Mozambican institutions—reduced to vague promises and a lack of tangible results—constitutes a grave violation of the right to truth and justice, as protected by the Constitution of the Republic and multiple international treaties ratified by Mozambique.

Amidst the pain of the families seeking truth, the public administration remains indifferent to the grief of those who lost their sons in the line of duty.

The 2019 incident took place in an area marked by cross-border trafficking and insecurity, fre-

quently used for the illegal transfer of stolen vehicles from South Africa into Mozambique. According to reports at the time, the exchange of fire occurred on the Mozambican side, though the South African military claimed the clash happened on South African soil.

The official South African version describes a routine patrol action by its border forces, with no casualties reported. In Mozambique, however, the episode led to the deaths of two PRM officers, including Benício Guirruta, who were on duty at the time.

Despite the diplomatic complexity involved—since the incident included armed forces from two countries—Mozambican institutions cannot remain paralysed. Diplomacy must not be used as an excuse for impunity. The families have a right to truth, memory, and reparation.

Five years on, mourning, outrage, and a growing sense of abandonment by the State endure. For Laura Guirruta, each day without answers is another act of violence.

The Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CDD) will continue to press for this case not to be forgotten and calls upon civil society, the media, and national justice institutions to demand accountability. Silence cannot be the final word on the death of public servants on duty.



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


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

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