

March 21, 2025

Daniel Francisco Chapo  
President of the Republic of Mozambique,  
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PABX 2000 Av. Julius Nyerere,  
Maputo, Mozambique

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Dear President Chapo,

We at the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), an independent nongovernmental organization that champions press freedom worldwide, write to urge your administration to take decisive steps to ensure that the Mozambican media can operate without fear of reprisal. Specifically, we call on your government to provide information regarding the whereabouts of two disappeared journalists and to guarantee accountability in the killings of at least two others. As a former journalist, we are confident that you appreciate the critical role that a free and independent press plays in strengthening democracy in Mozambique.

During your February visit to Cabo Delgado, you urged journalists there to “continue to do the job with excellence.”<sup>1</sup> However, this will be difficult unless there is meaningful action to investigate and hold accountable those responsible for the disappearance of journalists Ibraimo Mbaruco<sup>2</sup> and Arlindo Chissale.<sup>3</sup> Palma Community Radio reporter and presenter Mbaruco disappeared in April 2020, shortly after sending a text message stating that he was surrounded by soldiers. Nearly five years later, Pinnacle News editor

<sup>1</sup> Integrity Magazine, “Sobre “jorrar sangue devido às manifestações”: Daniel Chapo diz que seu discurso foi manipulado”, February 2, 2025, <https://integritymagazine.co.mz/arquivos/39166>

<sup>2</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, “Radio Journalist Ibraimo Abú Mbaruco missing in Mozambique”, April 17, 2020, <https://cpj.org/2020/04/radio-journalist-ibraimo-mbaruco-missing-in-mozamb/>

<sup>3</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, “Blogger killed, editor missing as Mozambique’s press freedom crisis deepens”, February 5, 2025, <https://cpj.org/2025/02/blogger-killed-editor-missing-as-mozambiques-press-freedom-crisis-deepens/>

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Chissale disappeared under similar circumstances. On January 7, 2025, he was taken by eight men, some of whom were wearing military uniforms. His whereabouts remain unknown. We respectfully urge your administration to act swiftly and provide the journalists' families with answers about their loved ones' fate. We call on your government to send a strong message that attacks on journalists will not be tolerated. Further inaction will only perpetuate fear among other journalists that they could be forcibly disappeared as well.

Over the last two years, CPJ has also documented the killings of two journalists. In December 2023, newspaper editor and commentator João Chamusse was found dead in his home.<sup>4</sup> Though one person was convicted of this killing in September 2024, Chamusse's family, through their lawyer, have said the judicial proceedings were unsatisfactory because the motive and a suspected accomplice were never fully investigated.<sup>5</sup> More recently, on December 12, 2024, a police officer shot blogger Albino Sibia<sup>6</sup> while he was live streaming officers shooting tear gas at houses during protests in Ressano Garcia. The officer had ordered Sibia to stop filming, and when the blogger continued, he fired two shots into his back. Sibia died four hours later. No one has been held to account.

These killings were not isolated incidents of violence against the media. Police also shot at journalists wearing "Press" vests who were covering Sibia's funeral, injuring at least two of them. Throughout the 2024 election period, CPJ documented<sup>7</sup> numerous incidents<sup>8</sup> where journalists were arrested, assaulted, and harassed by government officials while reporting the news. At least two foreign correspondents were expelled, while internet disruptions further frustrated the free flow of information.

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<sup>4</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, "João Chamusse: Killed", <https://cpj.org/data/people/joao-chamusse/>

<sup>5</sup> Agência de Informação de Moçambique, "Assassino de João Chamusse condenado a 20 anos de prisão", September 27, 2024, <https://aimnews.org/2024/09/27/assassino-de-joao-chamusse-condenado-a-20-anos-de-prisao/>

<sup>6</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, "Blogger killed, editor missing as Mozambique's press freedom crisis deepens", February 5, 2025, <https://cpj.org/2025/02/blogger-killed-editor-missing-as-mozambiques-press-freedom-crisis-deepens/>

<sup>7</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, "At least 5 journalists harassed or assaulted covering pre-election events in Mozambique", June 7, 2024, <https://cpj.org/2024/06/at-least-5-journalists-harassed-or-assaulted-covering-pre-election-events-in-mozambique/>

<sup>8</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, "Journalists in the crossfire of Mozambique's post-election crisis", November 19, 2024, <https://cpj.org/2024/11/journalists-in-the-crossfire-of-mozambiques-post-election-crisis/>



Committee to Protect Journalists

We also remain concerned about legal harassment of the press. Journalists have been accused of breaching anti-terror laws.<sup>9</sup> Mozambique's colonial-era criminal defamation and insult laws have been weaponized against the media.<sup>10</sup> The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) has said that insult laws "impede freedom of speech" and that criminal defamation undermines "the role of the media as a watchdog."<sup>11</sup> Therefore, we urge your administration to undertake comprehensive reform of laws that criminalize journalism, including sections of the penal code that stipulate prison terms for defamation, insult, and publication of false news.

We hope that your government takes urgent and appropriate steps to safeguard and nurture press freedom in Mozambique. We thank you for considering our concerns and would welcome an opportunity to discuss these further with your government.

Sincerely,

Angela Quintal  
Regional Director, Africa  
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[www.cpj.org](http://www.cpj.org)

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<sup>9</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, "Mozambican journalist Arlindo Chissale Faces lesser charge after terrorism accusation", November 15, 2022, <https://cpj.org/2022/11/mozambican-journalist-arlindo-chissale-faces-lesser-charge-after-terrorism-accusation/>

<sup>10</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, "Mozambican journalist Leonardo Gimo investigated for criminal defamation over report on alleged police corruption", June 27, 2023, <https://cpj.org/2023/06/mozambican-journalist-leonardo-gimo-investigated-for-criminal-defamation-over-report-on-alleged-police-corruption/>

<sup>11</sup> African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, "Resolution on Repealing Criminal Defamation Laws in Africa - ACHPR/Res.169(XLVIII)10", November 24, 2010, <https://achpr.au.int/en/adopted-resolutions/169-resolution-repealing-criminal-defamation-laws-africa-achprres169xlvi>.