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First UA: 72/25 Index: AFR 41/0154/2025 Mozambique of July 31, 2025

## **MOZAMBIQUE SUSPECTED POISONING OF JOURNALIST MUST BE INVESTIGATED**

On July 27, journalist Selma Inocência Marivate informed Amnesty International that she believes she was poisoned with heavy metals during a work trip to Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, in March 2025.

Shortly after returning to Germany, where she lives and works, she became seriously ill. Medical tests later revealed dangerously high levels of heavy metals in her body, with no clear explanation.

She is now in critical condition and undergoing intensive treatment to remove the toxic substances from her system.

Amnesty International is calling on the Mozambican authorities to urgently investigate this suspected poisoning and to publicly condemn all attacks against journalists.

### **Write to the Prosecutor General of Mozambique urging the authorities to:**

- Ensure a prompt, independent, and impartial investigation into the suspected poisoning of Selma Inocência Marivate.
- Hold those responsible fully to account through fair and transparent legal proceedings.
- Publicly condemn all attacks and threats against journalists and human rights defenders in Mozambique.
- Respect and protect press freedom and the broader right to freedom of expression.

### **Write to:**

Prosecutor General of the Republic

Américo Julião Letela

Av. Vladimir Lenine nr. 121

Maputo, Mozambique

Email [denuncias@pgr.gov.mz](mailto:denuncias@pgr.gov.mz)

*Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General,*

### **And copy:**

His Excellency Alfredo Fabio Nuvunga

High Commissioner

Embassy of the Republic of Mozambique

1525 New Hampshire Avenue NW

Washington, D.C., DC 20036

United States of America

Tel: (202) 293-7146 / 290-5322 (24h) Fax: (202) 835-0245

Email: [washington.dc@embamoc.gov.mz](mailto:washington.dc@embamoc.gov.mz)

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On March 2, 2025, Selma Inocência Marivate traveled from Germany, where she lives and works, to Maputo, Mozambique, to lead a one-week training session for local journalists. While in the country, she became concerned for her safety and decided to leave early, departing on March 6.

Shortly after returning to Germany, she began experiencing serious health problems, including extreme fatigue, muscle weakness, nausea, kidney pain, and loss of balance. Several medical tests were inconclusive, but a toxicology report in Berlin confirmed heavy metal poisoning. Dangerous levels of mercury, cadmium, uranium, and thallium were found in her system. Some substances were present in what doctors described as *“physiologically inexplicable concentrations.”*

She is currently undergoing chelation therapy, the standard treatment for heavy metal poisoning. Her condition remains critical. She is unable to work or continue her studies. The case has been reported to German authorities, but as the suspected poisoning likely occurred in Mozambique, it is essential that Mozambican authorities investigate without delay.

The suspected poisoning took place during a time of heightened political tension in Mozambique, following the October 2024 general elections. Selma has been a vocal critic of human rights abuses committed during and after that period, when protests erupted across the country. Nearly 400 people were reportedly killed between October 2024 and February 2025 during demonstrations.

Her case is not unique. In December 2024, activist Wilker Dias, coordinator of the DECIDE Platform, also reported signs of poisoning after a week-long visit to Maputo. Laboratory tests supported his claims, but no investigation was carried out despite public pressure.

Following the October 2024 elections, Mozambique saw widespread protests over disputed results and broader political and economic grievances. Security forces responded with unlawful and excessive force. Nearly 400 people were reportedly killed, while thousands were injured or arbitrarily detained.

Amnesty International found that security forces violated international human rights laws, attacking not only protesters but also bystanders. During this time, opposition figures and journalists were frequently targeted with threats and violence.

In January 2025, journalist and opposition member Arlindo Chissale disappeared in what appears to be an enforced disappearance. Witnesses say he was taken from a public minibús by men believed to be security agents. He has not been seen since January 7.

Despite calls for an investigation, Mozambican authorities have yet to respond. His case, like Selma’s, reflects a broader pattern of repression, intimidation, and impunity in the country.

***Please take action as soon as possible until January 30, 2026. The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.***