

SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

PRESSURE STATE AUTHORITIES TO STOP THREATS AND ATTACKS AGAINST THE MEDIA

Government officials, politicians, members of the armed services and police top the list of those responsible for harassments, assaults and unlawful detention of journalists in Mozambique in 2019. State authorities need to respect constitutional provisions on media freedom, which includes the right to gather and disseminate information.

LOCATE AND RELEASE REPORTER IBRAIMO MBARUCO

Government must work to locate and release Radio Comunitária journalist Ibraimo Mbaruco, who was kidnapped by military forces on April 7, 2020 in Palma, Cabo Delgado Province.

INVESTIGATE AND PROSECUTE CRIMES AGAINST MEDIA WORKERS

Police should investigate cases involving the attack, assault or unlawful detention of journalists and other media practitioners conducting their professional duties.

PRESSURE THE POLICE TO ALLOW ALL MEDIA AT BRIEFINGS

Police need to stop excluding private media outlets from their weekly press briefings.

CREATE DIALOGUE BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS

MISA Mozambique and other relevant actors should promote a permanent dialogue between media institutions, the government, the parliament and the courts.

MEDIA INDEPENDANCE

PREVENT THE GOVERNMENT FROM USING ADVERTISING TO CONTROL PRIVATE MEDIA OUTLETS

Government should create an instrument to distribute advertising fairly to public and private media so that it isn't used as a tool to harass, control and silence the press.

REVOKE DECREE 40/2018

Government should revoke Decree No. 40/2018, which sets exorbitant fees for the licensing of media outlets and the accreditation of journalists. The Department of Information (Gabinho), which introduced the fees without consultation with media stakeholders, argues the fees are justified as media needs to help support the Office's activities. Likewise, the Constitutional Council should declare the decree unconstitutional following a petition filed by civil society through the Ombudsman.

LAWS AND REGULATIONS

PRESSURE THE GOVERNMENT TO AMEND THE STATE SECRETS LAW

Parliament, civil society and international organisations must put pressure on Mozambique's government to review and clarify Law No. 12/79. It broadly defines as classified documents, those "containing military, political, economic, commercial, scientific, and technical or any other data or information which is detrimental to the security of the State and the people and the national economy." This wide definition severely undermines citizens' constitutional right to information.

SPEED UP THE CREATION OF A MEDIA REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Parliament needs to accelerate the process of establishing a regulatory framework for the media sector. This should include the revision of the Press Law of 1991, the introduction of legal framework for broadcast media and the creation of a professional press card.

REVISE ARTICLE 69 OF THE PUBLIC PROBITY LAW

Under Article 69 of the Public Probity Law, it is an offence to disclose the income of civil servants punishable by up to six months in jail. Government should amend this article to allow the press to publish such information if it is in the public interest.

NEW MEDIA AND ICTS

REVIEW THE CYBER SECURITY ACT TO PROMOTE ONLINE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Government and parliament should create a specific legal framework on cyber security in Mozambique. Media companies and civil society organisations should increase their awareness of the issue of cyber security in Mozambique.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

BETTER DISSEMINATE INFORMATION TO CITIZENS

Government needs set up systems to make it easier for citizens to access information held by public bodies as regulated by Law No. 34/2014 and Decree No. 35/2015 governing the right to information. This could include, for example, proactively publishing information of public interest and making it available online as well as setting aside spaces within public institutions where people can consult this information.

These recommendations are also available on our website: misa.org.mz