

International Statement on the current situation in Mozambique

The undersigning international organizations express concern about massive displacements and widespread violence in the Mozambican countryside and call the Mozambican government and the international community to respect and protect the rights of the Mozambican peasants.

The National Union of Mozambican Peasants (UNAC for the abbreviation in Portuguese) issued a press release on February 13, 2014 condemning killings, massive forced displacements and the general climate of violence that the Mozambican rural population is increasingly facing.[1] UNAC expresses grave concern about the deterioration of peace that was achieved in Mozambique 21 years ago after a civil war that lasted 16 years. According to testimonies received by UNAC from its members in affected regions, the widespread attacks and military clashes between alleged armed men of the Mozambican National Resistance (Renamo) and the Mozambican military forces are severely affecting not only the security of the Mozambican peasants but also their ability to till their lands and to attend to their agricultural activities - all of this with serious impacts on the upcoming harvest and the food sovereignty of Mozambique. In particular, UNAC highlights the situation of 69,000 peasant families (approximately 345,000 persons) directly and indirectly affected by forced displacement, harassments and threats in the following areas: Machanga, Chibabava, Maringué, Gorongosa, Nhamatanda and Dondo districts in Sofala province; Moatize district in Tete province; Macossa em Manica, Rapale and Mecuburi in Nampula province; Homoine, Funhalouro and Vilanculos in Inhambane province.

We, the undersigned organisations, have been monitoring since 2009 the human rights situation of peasants in Mozambique and the developments in the field of agriculture and rural development. We are extremely concerned that the widespread systematic violations of the economic and social rights of the Mozambican peasants due to development projects can further deteriorate. The escalation of conflicts in the country threatens peace and the social fabric of Mozambican society.

We therefore support UNAC's call to the combatants/armed parties to immediately stop all hostilities, give up the armed struggle and come back to an inclusive and democratic mechanism of dialogue to resolve conflicts.

According to UNAC, there are several reports by eye witnesses and media on threats and harassments against civilians in the country as well as on arbitrary detentions and even killings of civilians. However, due to a lack of independent information about the events occurred in the country during the last months, the number of people allegedly having been arrested or killed cannot be confirmed. So far, there has been no investigation of the reported incidents, thus leading to a situation of impunity that increases the vulnerability of the Mozambican population.

We therefore call upon the government of Mozambique to allow for an independent investigation of the events since the breakout of the hostilities, and particularly all reports on threats, arrests, killings and human rights violations over the last months.

The current armed conflict between Renamo and the Mozambican army is a breach of the 1992 Rome Peace Accord that put an end to Mozambique's 16 years of civil war. The peace negotiations involved the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union as observers. We therefore call upon the international community, particularly the United Nations, African Union, and European Union, to engage with the government of Mozambique in ending current hostilities in Mozambique and initiate an investigation of the reported human rights violations.

Moreover, we urge the Mozambican state and the international community to respect and protect the rights of the Mozambican peasants by reviewing the current development strategy, taking particularly into account the views of Mozambican peasants as contained, for instance, in the Plano Nacional de Apoio a Agricultura Camponesa developed by UNAC.

[1] See Comunicado de Imprensa – Os Impactos da Situação Política e Militar no Desenvolvimento da Agricultura em Moçambique

<http://www.unac.org.mz/index.php/7-blog/74-os-impactos-da-situacao-politica-e-militar-no-desenvolvimento-da-agricultura-em-mocambique>

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Signed by

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Centro Internazionale Crocevia, Italy

Concerned Citizen Group with the Development of Mozambique, Japan

Federação de Órgãos para Assistência Social e Educacional (FASE), Brazil

FIAN International

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