



## Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference

08 November 2024

Most Rev. Inacio Saure  
President of CEM  
Samuel Kankhomba 188  
Maputo  
MOZAMBIQUE

Dear Archbishop Saure and CEM bishops

We have been following the elections in your Conference area with keen interest and pastoral concern. As our Inter-regional Meeting of the Bishops of Southern Africa (IMBISA) observed on 9 October 2024, “The elections took place in a context of great discontent and a strong popular demand for strengthening the rule of law and greater transparency in electoral administration.” In this situation, which IMBISA so aptly described, we had hoped that these elections would usher in a peaceful democratic atmosphere, leading to the end of violence and suffering affecting the ordinary people of your beautiful country.

We were greatly saddened to read from your statement released on 22 October 2024: “Once again, there was fraud on a grand scale, such as ballot box stuffing, forged notices, and many other ways of covering up the truth. Irregularities and fraud, largely carried out with impunity, reinforced the lack of trust in electoral bodies, in leaders who abdicate their dignity and disregard the truth and the sense of service that should guide those to whom the people entrust their vote. In this way, they push the people to confirm their suspicions and question the legitimacy of those elected”.

While the electoral bodies did certify the results, you were unequivocal in your statement that “certifying a lie is a fraud”. The certification of results was a lie, which became clear to us when we observed in the media on 31 October 2024 the expression of discontent about the election results by multitudes of people peacefully protesting. We were greatly shocked and saddened to watch the harsh repression by security forces in response to such a peaceful protest. We pray for those who have died from the effects of violence and wish those who got injured a speedy recovery.

We join you in calling on the authorities to address the causes of disgruntlement about these elections and to respect the will of the Mozambican people. Should the situation deteriorate, we call on the SADC region to deal with this fallout.

We regret the decision of our government in South Africa to endorse the elections despite such widespread complaints and its speediness in congratulating a party that “has won” when the people on the ground feel that their voices have not been

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heard. It will be difficult to continue repressing the will of people who want to be free. Should the incumbent government continue along this path, it will be impossible to rule the country, and life will become more miserable.

Brothers, we express our solidarity with you and most of the people of Mozambique, who are the “little ones” of the Lord and whom the Lord loves. Together with you:

- We affirm the basic principle of Catholic Social teaching that all parties should put the common good above all private, party, and group interests.
- We echo the call made by the Archbishop of Maputo and Vice President of the Episcopal Conference of Mozambique, Archbishop João Carlos, calling for restraint and respect for the right to demonstrate and refrain from destroying public and private property.
- We join you in your call to the nation to “have the courage to dialogue, to determine the results of the elections in a transparent manner by publishing and comparing the original notices held by the different actors, create spaces for collaboration in governance and consider a possible government of national unity; involve competent and serious institutions in the country in the management of electoral processes, present and future; and give Mozambique a future of hope.”

We intend to visit you soon as an expression of our solidarity with the Mozambican people and the Church in Mozambique in these times of trial. Mozambique deserves truth, peace, tranquillity, and tolerance!

Let us pray for peace, be artisans of justice, and witness the truth, for “the truth will set you free.” (John 8, 32).

Yours Brotherly in Lord from all the bishops of the SACBC

Rt. Rev. Sithembele Sipuka  
SACBC President

