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AT THE CENTRAL PRISON AND B.O.

Two Weeks Later: Still No Names of the Victims of the Massacre Perpetrated by Security Forces



Nearly two weeks after the massacre following the alleged escape on December 25 from the Central Prison of Maputo and the Maximum Security Prison, known as B.O., families still do not know whether their relatives are alive or not. On the day following the alleged escape, when families arrived at the penitentiary with food for their detained relatives, they were instructed to

go to the Central Hospital of Maputo. There, some found their relatives injured, while others were directed to the morgue, where many bodies remained unidentified.

As of today, Sunday, January 5, many families still have no information about their relatives who were in detention. Official sources indicate that 33 people were killed. However, internal sources dis-

pute this information, which was released by the General Commander of the Mozambican Police (PRM), Bernardino Rafael. Beyond the 33 reported dead, more than 100 people were executed after

being recaptured. Some of these people were buried in mass graves. As a result, the prisoners murdered by security forces remain mere numbers to this day.

How It Happened

On December 25, a Wednesday, Bernardino Rafael reported that during the operation to prevent the mass escape from the Central Prison of Maputo, 33 inmates were killed. This figure refers to those killed during the operation, which, according to the General Commander himself, was orchestrated externally—a claim later contradicted by the Minister of Justice, Helena Kida. She stated that the escape occurred following a rebellion inside the prison.

Of those who escaped, some were recaptured by security forces. After their recapture, these prisoners were taken to a room within the penitentiary, where a massacre occurred. Over 100 recaptured prisoners were executed by the Special Operations Group (GOE), a subunit of the Rapid Intervention Unit (UIR), and other defense and security forces. The total confirmed number of deaths exceeds 130 prisoners, highlighting the brutality and gravity of the actions carried out by the security forces.

The Start of the Alleged Escape

The prisoners seized two AKM weapons belonging to the Penitentiary Guard and took two guards hostage. When the police arrived and began shooting, the prisoners used the hostages as shields, displaying them to force the shooting to stop. At that moment, the prisoners initiated a mass escape, with more than 2,000 inmates fleeing the prison.



Police Action and Recapture of Prisoners

Security forces, including the GOE, military, UIR, and Protective Police, conducted search operations and managed to recapture more than 300 fugitives.

The Massacre

After the recapture, these prisoners were taken to a room within the penitentiary. It was at this moment, between the night of December 25 and the early hours of December 26, that the massacre began. Over 100 recaptured prisoners were executed by the GOE and UIR within the penitentiary itself.

Impact on Families

When families arrived at the penitentiary with food for their detained relatives, they were instructed to go to the Central Hospital. There, some found their relatives injured, while others were directed to the morgue, where many bodies remained unidentified.

Conclusion

The families are devastated—some because of the barbaric way their relatives were killed and others because they do not know whether their loved ones are alive or not. They face a scenario of profound pain, uncertainty about the fate of their loved ones, and a search for answers amid the silence of state institutions.

This episode starkly exposes the gravity of human rights violations and the systematic brutality

employed by security forces during and after the mass escape. The death toll may still rise, as many of the injured are not receiving adequate medical care, further exacerbating the impact of this tragedy.

For this reason, the Center for Democracy and Human Rights (CDD) reiterates the need for independent investigations so that those responsible for the massacre are held accountable.



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