

**Southern Africa Human Rights Community Condemns and Denounces the Threats to the
Life of Mozambique Activist Prof. Adriano Nuvunga**

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**Gaborone/Johannesburg/Harare/Lilongwe/Luanda/Lusaka/Kinshasa/Maseru/Dar e Salaam/
/Windhoek/Port Louis/Antananarivo**

We, the undersigned civil society organisations and community of human rights defenders from the Southern Africa region and beyond, condemn and denounce in the strongest possible terms the macabre and cowardly act of threatening the physical integrity of leading social activist, Professor Adriano Nuvunga, Director of the Center for Democracy and Development (CDD), President of the Mozambique Human Rights Defenders Network (RMDDH) and Deputy Chairperson of the Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (SouthernDefenders).

In the early hours of Monday morning of 15th August, 2022, unknown individuals threw two bullets into Prof Adriano Nuvunga's residence in Maputo, Mozambique. According to the National Criminal Investigation Service (SERNIC) officers, the bullets are for an AK-47 assault rifle. The bullets were thrown at the front door of Prof Adriano Nuvunga's residence, at approximately 05:00 am, while he was still sleeping.

We are reliably informed that the bullets were partially wrapped in white paper with a writing not possible to decipher in full, but in which one of the phrases says "WATCH OUT NUVUNGA". We understand that Prof Nuvunga made a timely report to the police authorities and SERNIC officers went to the scene to collect the bullets and investigate the case.

Regrettably Mozambique has an unfortunate history of impunity for attacks against human rights defenders. This macabre act takes place within the context of increasing closure of civic space and attempts to block the activities of civil society organizations in the country.

This incident also demonstrates a growing pattern of politically motivated violence against Professor Nuvunga. In 2020, a similar threat was made to him where 3 unidentified individuals called him from an anonymous number, stating that a bomb has been planted at his home. We therefore urge the security forces in Mozambique to promptly and impartially investigate this matter, as all these incidents cannot be looked at in isolation.

This threat to Professor Nuvunga's life comes at a time where he has been critical of the manner in which the government is responding to the ongoing social unrest in the country, as a result of the worsening economic situation in Mozambique. Furthermore, Professor Nuvunga is a human rights defender at the forefront of defending civic space in the country who has repeatedly criticized the series of human rights abuse in Mozambique, including cases of corruption against political elites.

This cowardly act of intimidation and threat to the life of the social activist Prof Adriano Nuvunga needs to be fully investigated in an open and transparent manner with a view to bringing the perpetrators to justice.

We want to unequivocally emphasize and remind the authorities in Mozambique that social organizations are institutions created under the authority of the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique and the activities of their members are fully permitted by the law. The state authorities have an obligation to ensure and guarantee that they operate in a peaceful environment and under the protection of competent State bodies. Further the right to human rights defending is provided for under international standards that are binding on Mozambique, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights as well as the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, that was universally adopted in 1998.

As a community of human rights defenders from the Southern Africa region and beyond and signatories to this statement, we express our total support and solidarity with Prof Nuvunga, the President of the Mozambique Human Rights Defenders Network (RMDDH), his family and his colleagues in the human rights fraternity. We will not remain silent against cowardly acts of threats to human rights defenders for the exercise of freedoms, rights and constitutional guarantees anywhere in Southern Africa, even where perpetrators threaten use of firearms against unarmed civilians, as in Prof Nuvunga's case. The right to life and security is the most basic human right and recognized as a fundamental right of people in Mozambique through the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique.

We therefore demand that the investigation of the case be swift, open and transparent and that the perpetrators be identified and brought to justice.

In particular we urge the authorities to:

- Strongly condemn the series of threats to Professor Nuvunga.
- Reaffirm Mozambique's commitment to promoting and protecting human rights and in particular, the protection of human rights defenders from threats, attacks or other forms of reprisals.
- Conduct immediate, thorough, and impartial investigations into all the threats that have been made against Professor Nuvunga, with a view to bringing those responsible to justice.
- Adopt measures to ensure that government officials or other public figures refrain from making statements or declarations stigmatising the legitimate work of human rights defenders in Mozambique.

Endorsed by the following civil society organisations:

1. Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (southern Defenders)
2. Mozambique Human Rights Defenders Network (RMDDH)
3. Center for Democracy and Development (CDD)
4. Pan African Human Rights Defenders Network (AfricanDefenders)
5. Helen Suzman Foundation (HSF);
6. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
7. Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria
8. The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR)
9. DITSHWANELO - The Botswana Centre for Human Rights
10. Bridging the Gap: Botswana
11. Advancing Rights in Southern Africa (ARISA)
12. Botswana Gender Based Violence Prevention and Support Centre
13. Botswana Centre for Public Integrity
14. Chapter One Foundation, Zambia
15. Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum
16. Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights
17. Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition
18. Institute for Democracy & Leadership (IDEAL), Swaziland
19. Youth and Society (YAS), Malawi
20. Stepping Stones International
21. Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe
22. Amnesty International
23. SADC Lawyers Association
24. Angolan Human Rights Defenders Network (KUTAKESA)
25. Southern Africa Women Human Rights Defenders Network (SAWHRDN)
26. Africa Judges and Jurists Forum
27. Seinoli Legal Centre, Lesotho
28. Khulumani Support Group
29. The Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA)
30. West African Human Rights Defenders Network (WAHRDN/**ROADDH**)
31. Centre for Women Human Rights Defenders in Africa

Endorsed by the following individuals:

1. Arnold Tsunga, Human rights lawyer, Zimbabwe
2. Keiso Mohloboli, Woman human rights defender, Lesotho
3. Washington Katema, Human rights defender, Zimbabwe
4. Blessing Gorejena-Ndlovu, Human rights lawyer Zimbabwe
5. Thulani Maseko, Human rights defender, Swaziland
6. Tiseke Kasambala, Woman human rights defender, Malawi

7. Norman Tjombe, Human rights defender, Namibia
8. Alice Mogwe, Botswana
9. Charles Kajaloweke, Malawi
10. Zenaida Machado, Senior Researcher, Human Rights Watch
11. Roshnee Narrandes, Woman human rights defender, South Africa
12. Lisa Jamu, Stepping Stones International, Botswana
13. Muzi Masuku, Swaziland
14. Robson Chere, Human rights defender, Zimbabwe
15. Siphosami Malunga, The Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa
16. Janet Zhou, Zimbabwe
17. Constance Mukarati, Woman human rights defender, Zimbabwe
18. Simphiwe Sidu, Woman human rights defender, South Africa
19. Martin Masiga, Africa Judges and Jurists Forum
20. Justice Alfred Mavedzenge, Constitutional and Human Rights lawyer, Zimbabwe
21. Lorato Moalusi, Botswana Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Support Centre, Botswana
22. Ronald Chikwehere, Bridging the Gap, Botswana
23. Pusetso Morapedi, Botswana Centre for Public Integrity, Botswana
24. Elpídeo Mutemba, Human rights defender, Mozambique
25. Mooya Nyaundi, Human rights lawyer, Zimbabwe
26. Anton Mifsud-Bonnici, citizen of Malta
27. Prof Diana Jeater, Professor of African History, University of Liverpool