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## **Carlos Cardoso murder trial update 2nd December**

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### **Anibalzinho's mother stalls**

Maputo, 2 Dec (AIM) - Teresinha Mendonca, mother of suspected assassin Anibal dos Santos Junior ("Anibalzinho"), on Monday declined to give the Maputo City Court any evidence as to who had ordered the killing of Mozambique's top investigative journalist, Carlos Cardoso, in November 2000.

Last week Mendonca had told several of the Mozambican media that she had evidence which she would produce at the opportune moment. In these interviews she also claimed that two of those charged with the murder, Ayob and Momade Abdul Satar, had organised the escape of her son from the top security prison on 1 December.

But when forced to take the witness stand on Monday, Mendonca clammed up. When the presiding judge, Augusto Paulino, asked her for the evidence she had promised, she said "I can't prove anything. The evidence is in the case file".

The case file is thousands of pages long. When asked which passages in the case file she was referring to, Mendonca said "I prefer not to reply".

Mendonca also repeatedly mentioned cassettes allegedly in the possession of the former head of the Maputo branch of the Criminal Investigation Police (PIC), Antonio Frangoulis. Under repeated questioning she admitted that these were just recordings of Frangoulis's interviews with Anibalzinho in prison.

She said she did not know what they contained, but her son had revealed that he "told Frangoulis everything".

As for the Satars' organising the disappearance of Anibalzinho, Mendonca claimed "When I said that, it was because of all I heard in court. I decided it was them".

She had also insisted vehemently on the innocence of Nyimpine Chissano, the oldest son of President Joaquim Chissano, who has been repeatedly accused of paying for Cardoso's murder. Why had she specifically excluded "certain names" from the crime?, Paulino asked.

"I didn't say it wasn't them who did it", she replied. "I said Anibal wasn't a friend of Nyimpine. I know Anibal's friends. He never spoke to me about Nyimpine".

After she was forced to admit that she does not know everything her 31 year old son does, Paulino asked how she could then claim categorically that there were certain people Anibalzinho did not know and was not on friendly terms with.

"I saw his friends downstairs", insisted Mendonca. "They would come and wait for him. I never saw Nyimpine there. And Anibal never mentioned him".

Was she really claiming to know all her son's friends?, the judge insisted. "All his friends came to my house", she replied. "I know

my son's friends. If they were friends, he would have presented them at home".

When asked who these friends were, Mendonca could only give four names.

To show the contrast between her statements to the court and those to the media, Paulino had the tapes of last week's interviews with Mozambican radio and television played. In the TV tape, a confident Mendonca declared that all the court had heard about Nyimpine signing cheques covering payment for the murder "is utter lies".

She also declared, without the slightest hesitation, "I have proof, and I will present it in due time. I have proof that Nyimpine is not involved".

In her interview with Radio Mozambique, Mendonca gave her blessing to one of those accused of ordering the assassination, former bank manager Vicente Ramaya. She regarded Ramaya as "one of the most innocent people in this case".

Mendonca refused to reveal the current whereabouts of her fugitive son, but told the court she had never told any reporter that he was in London. The daily paper "Noticias" had printed this claim, and a "Noticias" reporter told AIM that Mendonca had indeed claimed that her son was holed up in the British capital.

Mendonca claimed that she had recently received threatening phone calls, but refused to say who they were from.

She was equally reticent when asked whether she had paid any money to the wife of Carlitos Rashid, the assassin who has confessed to firing the shots that killed Cardoso. Rashid said that before his arrest Mendonca gave his wife 500,000 meticais (about

20 US dollars), with the advice "tell your husband to disappear". Rashid ignored the advice because the sum was far too small.

Asked if she had offered this money, Mendonca replied "I prefer not to answer".

After this singularly unproductive bout of questioning, Paulino dismissed Mendonca with the dry words "Whenever you remember the evidence you mentioned, you can bring it to court".

Incompetence on the part of the Public Prosecutors Office meant that no further witnesses were heard on Monday. Several people were to have been subpoenaed. but the subpoenas were served too late.

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## **Mobile phones in top security jail**

Maputo, 2 Dec (AIM) - At the trial of the six men accused of murdering Mozambique's best-known journalist, Carlos Cardoso, the Public Prosecutor's Office on Monday displayed no less than seven mobile phones that had been confiscated from the accused.

Every one of the five men in the dock - the sixth, Anibal dos Santos Junior ("Anibalzinho") is being tried in absentia - had at least one mobile phone.

Two phones were seized from Momade Assife Abdul Satar ("Nini"), two from Carlitos Rashid, and one each from Ayob Abdul Satar, Vicente Ramaya, and Manuel Fernandes ("Escurinho").

Some of the seizures were very recent - this weekend a mobile phone was discovered in Rashid's cell. A search of Momade Satar's cell revealed three mobile phone batteries, two of the cards needed to activate mobile phones, a portable radio and a portable television.

It is entirely forbidden for prisoners to have access to such means of communication. Earlier in the trial, some of the accused had claimed that the police in the prison hire out phones for 100,000 meticaïs (about four US dollars) an hour.

But the presiding judge, Augusto Paulino, said that this haul of mobile phones "does not come from the police. These are their own phones that have been smuggled in".

He said the phones came into the prison hidden in containers of food brought by relatives, or even inside what, at first glance, appear to be aerosol cans of insecticide.

"From within the prison, these accused have never ceased communicating with the outside, with their families, their lawyers and others", said Paulino.

They had also used their mobile phones to threaten witnesses. Paulino said that one witness, Oswaldo Muianga, "was so panicked by threats from some of the accused that he pretended to be ill". (For some months in 2001 Muianga had feigned the loss both of his memory and of the power of speech.) Paulino added that one of the seized phones has been analysed by the country's sole mobile phone company, M-Cel, which deduced that several different phone cards had been used, some of them taken from stolen mobile phones.

The judge also noted the open boasts made by Momade Satar that he controlled a network of "private detectives" from his prison cell.

He wanted to put the phones on display "so that the public may know about them".

Ramaya's lawyer, Abdul Gani, admitted that the use of mobile phones broke prison rules. But he thought it quite understandable, in that the accused had been kept "isolated and incommunicado" for 20 months, and were anxious about their families.

He complained they had received no visits from family members since the escape of Anibalzinho on 1 September.

Paulino dismissed the complaint, since it made no sense to claim that someone who managed to obtain mobile phones was "incommunicado". He reminded Gani that Momade Satar had used a mobile phone to ring up the former head of the Maputo Criminal Investigation Police (PIC), Antonio Frangoulis, as recently as 19 November. "No doubt he spoke to his family and lawyer first", he said. (Frangoulis taped the call, and it was played in court last week.) Furthermore, the accused had stated openly that security was relaxed as from September 2001, when Paulino had given his initial ruling that there was enough evidence for the case to go to trial.

Security tightened again after Anibalzinho disappeared "to avoid any further escapes", said Paulino. "And even with tighter security, one of the accused manages to ring up Frangoulis". The judge could see no sign that the accused were really held incommunicado.

Momade Satar told the court that at least one seized phone was not on display. He said the prison authorities had taken a mobile phone from Anibalzinho a fortnight before his escape.

Satar suggested that from the phone records it might be possible to find out who Anibalzinho had spoken to, and who organised the escape.

Paulino asked the prosecuting attorney, Mourao Baluce, to look into the whereabouts of this phone.

<http://www.poptel.org.uk/mozambique-news/newsletter/Cardoso6.html>