

RSF wonders if the Mozambican government wants to shed light on the murder of Carlos Cardoso

In a letter addressed to Joaquim Chissano, President of the Republic of Mozambique, Robert Ménard, Secretary General of Reporters Sans Frontières (Reporters Without Borders - RSF), an organization campaigning for press freedom worldwide, called on the Mozambican authorities to immediately make public the first results of the investigation into the murder on 22 November 2000 of Carlos Cardoso, director of Metical, a independent daily. RSF also asked for human and financial resources to be allocated to the police in order to allow them to carry out an independent investigation. "A month after the murder of Carlos Cardoso, we have noticed some serious shortcomings which might harm the development of the investigation and nothing has been made public so far. This clearly indicates that the Mozambican authorities do not want to shed the light on this affair", added Robert Ménard.

According to the information collected by RSF, some of the witnesses were only heard briefly. For instance, only one journalist from Metical was heard. Carlos Cardoso's widow, told us that she "had only been heard once and very superficially". Among the shortcomings of the investigation noticed by RSF, was the fact that the scene of the murder was not cordoned off, and that eye-witnesses and inhabitants of the neighbourhood were not heard by the police, who did not take any photographs or technical measurements on the scene of the murder. The police did not draw an identikit picture of the murderers although some witnesses were able to describe them to journalists. Mozambican civil society's feeling is that the investigation is being stalled, if it had ever been started at all, since the Mozambican authorities have not shown any policitical will to identify the murderers.

It seems that the Mozambican authorities want to hold the neighbouring countries responsible for the investigation, although nothing can confirm that the murderers have fled the country. At a press conference in London on 13 December, President Joaquim Chissano declared that "organized crime" was behind Cardoso's murder although he did not present any fact or element that can confirm this theory. President Chissano has been trying to spread confusion by calling on Interpol to investigate the murder as Interpol has never been an investigating body.

RSF is calling on regional and international bodies to set up an international commission to monitor the developments of the inverstigation.

Carlos Cardoso, who headed the official press agency from 1980 to 1988 and set up Mediafax, the first independent newspaper in the early 90s, was shot dead late in the afternoon of 22 November, close to the office of Metical in Maputo. His driver was severely wounded in the incident. The following day, President Chissano announced that an investigation would be opened but the murderers had already fled the country. Carlos Cardoso had received death threats. He had been working on stories on financial bankruptcies and corruption cases.

<http://www.rsf.org/rsf/uk/html/afrique/cplp/lp/211200.html>