



CLA Statement condemning the killing of Mozambican lawyer Bernardo Antonio Dias

The Commonwealth Lawyers Association strongly condemns the killing of Mozambican lawyer, Bernardo Antonio Dias, who was killed on 19th October alongside Podemos party official Paulo Guambe when their car was attacked by gunmen.

Mr. Dias represented prominent opposition party politician Venancio Mondlane who participated in the recent presidential election in Mozambique. He had previously represented Podemos in election cases during last year's local government elections.

Mr. Dias' murder threatens to have a chilling effect on the independence of lawyers in Mozambique. Lawyers should never be associated with the causes of their clients. According to the Commonwealth Latimer House Principles, **"An independent, organized legal profession is an essential component in the protection of the rule of law"**.

The UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers states in Article 18: **"Lawyers shall not be identified with their client or their clients' causes as a result of discharging their functions"**. The Basic Principles also state that the security of lawyers shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities.

The CLA joins with the Mozambique Bar Association and SADC Lawyers Association condemning this brutal killing of a prominent Lawyer and supports calls for an independent investigation to find the perpetrators of this heinous crime.

Our deepest condolences go out to the families and friends of Bernardo Antonio Dias and Paulo Guambe and to the wider legal profession in Mozambique on this great loss.

Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA)

21st October 2024

The **Commonwealth Lawyers Association** is an international non-profit organisation which exists to promote and maintain the rule of law throughout the Commonwealth by ensuring that an independent and efficient legal profession, with the highest standards of ethics and integrity, serves the people of the Commonwealth. commonwealthlawyers.com