

**STATEMENT TO THE 56<sup>TH</sup> ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES RIGHTS, BANJUL (THE GAMBIA), BY THE INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA, ON THE MURDER OF PROF GILLES CISTAC IN MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE.**

Chairperson, Honourable Commissioners, State dignitaries, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

We wish to bring to the attention of the Commission the murder of Professor Gilles Cistac in Maputo, Mozambique. Professor Cistac was a human rights activist and professor of law at the University of Eduardo Mondlane. He was a former Board member of the IHRDA, and had been a key figure in a sensitive debate about autonomy for Mozambique's provinces and decentralization of power.

According to reports, Professor Cistac was shot and killed by four unidentified gunmen who remain at large. He was travelling to work on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 2015 when he was shot and killed.

We understand that an investigation is taking place by the Mozambican authorities, but that the investigation is being conducted in secrecy and that the perpetrators of the crime, although identified, are still at large. This is against the provisions of Articles 1, 4 and 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and other international human rights instruments to which Mozambique is a State party, which place the responsibility on the Mozambican government to investigate cases of deprivation of life, such as this, to bring the perpetrators to justice and to provide information on such investigations to the public.

We further understand that certain parties have threatened friends, colleagues and the family of Professor Cistac, and that Professor Cistac before his death gave notice to the government that he was under threat and asked the government for its protection.

We urge the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to call on the government of Mozambique to:

1. Conduct a transparent and effective investigation into the circumstances of Professor Cistac's death;
2. Provide public information explaining the government's reasoning for ignoring Professor Cistac's requests for protection in violation of Article 3 of the African Charter;
3. Provide appropriate protections for Professor Cistac's family, friends and colleagues and;
4. Encourage the citizens of Mozambique to respect the rights of others to freedom of expression as provided under Article 9 of the Charter.

Chairperson, Honourable Commissioners, State dignitaries, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

We thank the Commission for their consideration.

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**Katherine Mulhern**

Executive Director