

I am writing this to express my grave concern for economist Carlos Nuno Castel-Branco and newspaper editor Fernando Mbanze.

Castel-Branco is accused of defaming former President Armando Guebuzathe in relation to a Facebook post he made in November 2013, questioning the manner in which the former president had governed Mozambique. Fernando Mbanze is the editor of the MediaFax, and is charged with abusing freedom of the press under article 42 of Press Law in conjunction with the State Security Law. He published Carlos Nuno Castel-Branco's Facebook Post as an open letter in MediaFax.

The cases against the two should have been dropped under the Amnesty Law passed by the Mozambican parliament in August 2014. The law gives amnesty for all security related offences committed between March 2012 and August 2014.

In the case they are imprisoned, Amnesty International will consider them to be prisoners of conscience as their trial is politically motivated, relating to the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression, and it is intended to send a message of intimidation to other government critics.

I urge you to immediately drop all charges against Carlos Nuno Castel-Branco and Fernando Mbanze, as they have been charged solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression.

At the same time, I call on you to end the practice of harassment and intimidation of people peacefully expressing their views, and to uphold the right to freedom of expression.

I also call on you to repeal all legislation which unduly limits freedom of expression.

I will appreciate your prompt attention to the above.

Sincerely yours,