

UN urged to investigate allegations of severe Human Rights violations committed by Mozambique Security Forces at gas site

Local chiefs and Mozambique and international NGOs warn that current inquiries lack independence and fail to guarantee justice and protection for victims. They call for an investigation led by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, as the only way to ensure a fair, impartial, safe and victim-centred process. The inquiry should also investigate members of the Joint Task force in charge of protecting the site of TotalEnergies Mozambique LNG Project.

Local chiefs - traditional leaders - of Palma in Northern Mozambique and 15 surrounding villages, supported by 66 human rights and environmental organisations, have **formally requested the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to establish an independent investigation into severe human rights violations allegedly committed in 2021 by Mozambican security forces**, including members of the Joint Task Force protecting TotalEnergies' Mozambique LNG project in Cabo Delgado Province.

In the letter it is said:

"We do not consider that any of the ongoing initiatives are adequate and sufficient to ensure a fully independent and transparent investigation. We strongly believe that an investigation conducted by OHCHR is required to guarantee a fair, impartial, secure and victim-centred process," they state, adding that *"contrary to the other initiatives, such an investigation is trusted by victims and affected communities with the ability to provide them with justice and ensure accountability."*

In late September 2024, an article published by the news outlet [Politico](#) exposed allegations that between July and September 2021, Mozambican security forces accused a large group of villagers of being connected to the insurgency. According to that article, the Mozambican security forces separated the men from the women and children. They allegedly **detained 180 to 250 men in shipping containers near the entrance of TotalEnergies' Mozambique LNG site**, where they were treated inhumanely, tortured, and disappeared or were killed, with **only 26 survivors**. Women were allegedly subjected to humiliation, sexual assault, and rape before being released. These allegations have since been corroborated by [SourceMaterial](#) and [Le Monde](#).

Despite investigations announced by various actors (the Mozambique National Human Rights Commission, the [Mozambican Attorney General](#) and financiers such as the UK export credit agency and the [Dutch](#) government), the signatories highlight in their request to the UN High Commissioner that Mozambique has a documented poor track record regarding accountability and justice for past violations involving state security forces during armed conflict.

The organisations further stress that "there is genuine and legitimate fear of reprisals among victims, relatives and affected communities, if they were to contribute to an investigation that they do not trust".

The letter adds:

“Given the security concerns as well as the financial and political interests at stake, we urge you to offer the assistance of OHCHR to establish an international investigation that is fully external to the Mozambican authorities,” the letter states.

As TotalEnergies recently announced a restart of its project this Summer, and while its public and private financiers are requested to take a decision on their renewed support for the project, it is crucial that prior to that an independent and trustworthy international inquiry takes place.

The organisations have therefore requested that the **OHCHR investigation**:

- Establishes the facts, circumstances, and root causes of any alleged human rights violations and/or crimes.
- Adopts a gender-sensitive, victim-centred approach ensuring confidentiality and protection.
- Collects and preserves **evidence** for possible legal proceedings.
- Identifies the roles and responsibilities of the **Mozambican and other security forces**, and of **TotalEnergies** and its Mozambique LNG project.
- Provides recommendations with a view to addressing the root causes of the violations and ensuring justice for the victims.

TotalEnergies claims that Mozambique LNG has found no information or evidence confirming the allegations of severe abuses and torture.

The signatories urge the OHCHR to act urgently and they **request a meeting with the High Commissioner to discuss the request** further.

For more information:

Your contact details

Notes

Amnesty International has documented several cases of serious human rights violations and abuses by state and non-state actors for which the government has failed to carry out thorough, prompt, impartial and effective investigations and to bring the suspected perpetrators to justice. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/AFR4135702021ENGLISH.pdf>

Human Rights Watch has made a submission focusing on problems related to impunity for recent and past violations and abuses by Mozambique state security forces during armed conflict.

"<https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/11/submission-universal-periodic-review-mozambique> :