

URGENT ACTION

RETURN JOURNALIST'S SEIZED WORK EQUIPMENT

On 16 June, officers of Mozambique's National Criminal Investigation Service seized the work equipment of investigative journalist Estácio Valoi from his home in Pemba, Cabo Delgado province, as part of criminal proceedings against him linked to his reporting on environmental crime. The search and seizure warrant did not provide any factual or legal justification for the confiscation of the devices, which have to date yet to be returned. The continued confiscation prevents Estácio Valoi from carrying out his work and risks undermining the confidentiality of his journalistic sources. The Mozambican authorities must immediately return Estácio Valoi's personal equipment unless they can demonstrate before a competent court that its continued retention is lawful, necessary and proportionate.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Prosecutor General of the Republic

Américo Julião Letela

Av. Vladimir Lenine nr. 121, Maputo, Mozambique

Email: denuncias@pgr.gov.mz

Dear Prosecutor General,

I am writing to express my concern about the criminal proceedings instituted against investigative journalist **Estácio Valoi** and the continued seizure of his work equipment.

Estácio Valoi is an investigative journalist and editor of the online publication Moz24h. For over 10 years, he has reported on environmental crime, illegal logging, corruption and the conflict in Cabo Delgado province, which has been under [attacks](#) since 2017. On 25 August 2025, he published an [investigation](#) concerning 111 containers of timber seized by the Mozambican authorities at the Port of Beira allegedly linked to Safi Timber company. On 24 December 2025, the company's lawyers [demanded](#) that the article be removed and threatened legal action.

On 23 April 2026, Estácio Valoi was declared a suspect following a criminal defamation complaint brought by Safi Timber. On 29 June, the Cabo Delgado Provincial Court confirmed that criminal proceedings against Estácio Valoi were pending before the courts but did not disclose the offence under investigation. On 16 June 2026, National Criminal Investigation Service officers searched his home in Pemba and seized his laptop, two mobile phones and a tablet. The search warrant reportedly did not state the factual or legal grounds for the seizure. On 26 June, Estácio Valoi complied with a request from the Public Prosecutor's Office and unlocked his devices. Over two weeks have passed and the authorities have yet to return his equipment to him. Also of concern is the fact that Estácio Valoi has reported indications that one of his devices appears to have been used to access his email account without his authorisation. The authorities have not publicly responded to these allegations. The continued retention of Estácio Valoi's work equipment prevents him from carrying out his journalistic work, undermines the confidentiality of his journalistic sources, and raises concerns about the use of criminal proceedings to interfere with legitimate investigative journalism on matters of public interest.

I urge you to immediately return Estácio Valoi's work equipment unless a competent court determines, through a reasoned decision, that its continued retention is lawful, strictly necessary and proportionate. Any access to or examination of his electronic devices must require separate prior judicial authorisation, be based on clearly identified facts and a recognised criminal offence and fully protect the confidentiality of journalistic sources and material.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Estácio Valoi is a Mozambican investigative journalist and editor of the independent news platform [Moz24h](#). For more than a decade, he has investigated illegal logging, environmental crime, corruption and the armed conflict in Cabo Delgado. His reporting has contributed to public debate on the exploitation of natural resources and environmental governance in Mozambique.

On 30 June, Estácio Valoi's lawyer formally requested the immediate return of the seized equipment, arguing that its continued retention was unnecessary and disproportionate.

Mozambique is a State Party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, both of which protect the right to freedom of expression. Any restriction on this right must be provided by law and be necessary and proportionate to achieve a legitimate aim. International human rights standards also recognize the protection of journalists' confidential sources as an essential safeguard for press freedom.

Journalists reporting on the conflict and other sensitive issues in Cabo Delgado have [for years](#) faced arbitrary arrest, detention, enforced disappearances and other reprisals. In December 2018, Estácio Valoi was arbitrarily detained by members of the Mozambican Armed Forces while reporting in Cabo Delgado. He was released without charge after several hours, but his work equipment was confiscated.

In January 2019, community radio journalist Amade Abubacar [was arrested](#) while interviewing people displaced by the conflict, held in military detention for 12 days without access to his family or lawyer, allegedly subjected to ill-treatment, and later prosecuted in connection with his reporting.

In April 2020, community radio journalist Ibraimo Abú Mbaruco was forcibly [disappeared](#) after sending a text message stating that he was surrounded by soldiers. His fate and whereabouts remain unknown.

In January 2025, journalist Arlindo Chissale reportedly forcibly [disappeared](#) after witnesses saw him being taken from a public minibus by men, some of whom were wearing military uniforms. His fate and whereabouts also remain unknown. Amnesty International has repeatedly documented intimidation and other reprisals against journalists reporting on Cabo Delgado, contributing to a climate of fear that undermines independent reporting in the province.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Portuguese

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 3 January 2027

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Estácio Valoi (he/him)