DECIDE REPORT

Mozambique, 13th November 2026

THIRD DAY OF VENÂNCIO MONDLANE'S TRIAL MARKED BY THE QUESTIONING OF THE DEFENDANT



The trial of Venâncio Mondlane, leader of the ANAMOLA party, continued this Thursday (19.11.2026) at the Supreme Court in Maputo. The session again discussed the presence of defence counsel Shamir Mendes in the courtroom, raised the question of the validity of the audio and video recordings submitted as evidence, and was taken up mainly by the judges' questioning of the defendant about his live broadcasts and the post-election demonstrations. The hearing was adjourned at around 3:00 p.m. and resumes tomorrow, 20 November.

Summary of the Day

- **Defence counsel kept in the courtroom:** the Court decided that Shamir Mendes will remain in the courtroom, seated with the other defence counsel, while it assesses his situation. It will receive a document from the Bar Association on the matter.
- **Validity of evidence under discussion:** the defence questioned the validity of the audio and video recordings submitted by the Public Prosecutor's Office. The Court assured that there will be an appropriate moment during the trial to validate or invalidate them.
- **Defendant questioned:** the judges questioned Venâncio Mondlane about the live broadcasts from October to January, the calling of demonstrations, the mobilisation of crowds and the damage to infrastructure and the economy.
- **Denies calling for destruction:** the defendant stated that the indictment rests on theories without facts, that he always called for "inertia" and not destruction, and that the deviations were the work of infiltrators.

- **More evidence from the defence:** the defence submitted new materials, which the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Assistente (private prosecutor) rejected. The Court ruled that the defendant may submit documents at any time, in the name of the right of defence.

1. Opening of the session

The judges entered the courtroom at around 10:22 a.m. On one side sat the three representatives of the Public Prosecutor's Office, accompanied by five cases of documents, and, next to them, Rodrigo Rocha, for the Assistente. In the centre sat the five judges, together with the Court staff, made up of two members and the assistant clerk. On the other side sat the three members of the defence, with Venâncio Mondlane in the middle, with documents, handouts, a bottle of water and an alcohol spray.

This was followed by the signing of the minutes, which took about 15 minutes.

2. Preliminary matters

a) Standing of defence counsel

The defence began by asking for clarification on who may speak on its side, that is, whether the defence counsel, in this case Shamir Mendes, may intervene or not. It also asked whether the matter was disciplinary in nature, for the purposes of the hearing, or whether it was actually intended to deny the counsel the right to speak.

Before the Court answered, the Presiding Judge gave the floor to the Public Prosecutor's Office, which reiterated that Shamir Mendes should not even be in the courtroom and that the Court must rule on the capacity in which he is present. The Assistente, Rodrigo Rocha, said that the discussion exists because the Court has not yet decided the matter, and clarified that the problem has nothing to do with the counsel's level of knowledge, which he may well have, but with the fact that there is no basis supporting his intervention.

The Court stated that it had received the document from the Bar Association on the matter and decided that, while it assesses it, Shamir Mendes will remain in the courtroom, seated with the other defence counsel.

b) Validity of the evidence: audio and video recordings

The defence then raised the question of the validity of the evidence, specifically the audio and video recordings submitted by the Public Prosecutor's Office. The Public Prosecutor's Office replied that this should have been done during the preliminary matters and that the trial follows phases, being now at the evidence stage, when the matter may be discussed.

The defence invoked Article 383 to argue that this point is not part of the preliminary matters. The judge assured that there will be an appropriate moment during the trial to assess and validate or invalidate the evidence, and noted that the session cannot be constantly interrupted for deliberation.

3. Questioning of the defendant

With these matters closed, the judges began questioning Venâncio Mondlane. In summary, these were the questions and the defendant's answers.

a) Live broadcasts and destruction of infrastructure

Asked whether, from October to January, he published live broadcasts and whether he had observed that, following his calls, infrastructure was destroyed, the defendant replied that the indictment is

built on many theories and no facts. As for linking the broadcasts to the destruction, he asked that a video be shown in which he tells people to destroy infrastructure. To avoid giving vague answers, he said, one of the roughly 30 videos in the case file proving that element must be shown.

b) Demonstrations without prior notice

A judge recalled that, in the broadcast of the 22nd, when calling the demonstrations, the defendant said it was not necessary to inform the country's authorities, and asked how he justifies holding a demonstration without notifying the police or giving prior notice to obtain authorisation. Venâncio Mondlane replied that there is no reference anywhere in the indictment to a violation of the law on demonstrations and that, therefore, there is no offence. He cited an author according to whom there are no illegal demonstrations, since they are the exercise of citizens' rights, and said that no legal provision, starting with the Constitution, speaks of authorisation. He added that there are spontaneous demonstrations, such as those of fans after winning a football match, which have no way of giving advance notice.

The defendant also said that, in that broadcast, he invited people to "inertia" and a group to go to the place where Elvino Dias was killed, to pay tribute to him.

c) "The time has come for the people to take power"

Asked about the meaning of the broadcast of the 29th, in which he said the time had come for the people to take power and to march from the South, the Centre and the North to Maputo, to fill the streets until 7 November, the defendant replied that the message must be understood in its political context: it is a metaphorical message, used by a political actor. "People in power", he explained, does not mean taking over the Assembly of the Republic, but that rights be respected; at the time, the election results were being contested. He added that a politician, like any other, mobilises crowds to convey a strong message and bring out the electoral truth.

He recalled that mobilisation did not start with him: in 2023 there were marches of people from various Maputo neighbourhoods, on the occasion of the municipal elections, which, he said, had an effect, with more seats in the Municipal Assembly, although that was not the objective.

d) The "we" and the dates of the broadcasts

The judge wanted to know who the "we" the defendant speaks of is and who the "I" who mobilises is. Venâncio Mondlane replied that it is a habit in political circles to associate with the collective, and that he sometimes uses the singular so as not to seem selfish. He considered it a politician's linguistic instinct and observed that, in court too, different forms such as "Your Honour" or "the defendant" are used for the same person, so there should not be too much grammatical rigidity.

As to who set the dates of the broadcasts, he replied that it was him. One of the judges then asked whether, when making the call, he foresaw that the mobilisation of crowds would cause harm to the State.

e) Foreseeing harm and infiltrators

The defendant replied that he always believed they would be peaceful marches, given the history of demonstrations he knows, and that he always called for "inertia" and not destruction. He said that people were identified who used a "false flag" strategy to divert the purpose of the demonstrations and that this was duly reported, but that he did not foresee the infiltration of agents.

It was noted that, in the content of the demonstrations and the live broadcasts, there is not a single spoken sentence saying "let's destroy". To defend himself, the defendant relied on the pen drive he submitted as evidence which, he said, is consistent with the rest of the evidence and shows that he always recalled the reason for the struggle: the demand for electoral truth and for human rights.

f) Subversion of public order and the "law of retaliation"

A judge asked whether the defendant acknowledges the Public Prosecutor's Office's charge that he sought to subvert public order by bringing people onto the streets for that purpose, and whether he considers it true. Venâncio Mondlane replied that the Public Prosecutor's Office presented the data well, but that the way it was transposed was a mistake, because it is tied to politics. He said that the idea of subverting the State was created in 2023 by state actors, referring to pages of the annex, and that he was already a defendant on 2 October, before the elections, without knowing why, because an alleged agent had accused him of having received information about a shutdown with radicalisation. To him, this makes no sense at all. On that same day, he stated, the interception of his calls was requested, until his phone was eventually taken from him.

As for the expression associated with the "law of retaliation" (lex talionis), which appears in the indictment, the defendant asked that the annex be checked and stated that it had been misinterpreted: it was not about killing police officers, and the context needs to be built. He explained that expressions such as "sweeping someone into hell" were a priestly way of speaking, of saying that those responsible for the deaths must be held accountable. According to him, it can be checked whether police officers were killed after those words: the events presented by the Public Prosecutor's Office as evidence are out of chronological order, that is, they occurred earlier, which can be proven. He also noted that the Public Prosecutor's Office did not submit, for example, medical reports on the causes of death of the people it claims died after those words, and that the defence submitted news reports from that date to prove that no one lost their life.

g) Economy and tolls

The judge asked whether the damage to the economy was also caused by the blocking of toll payments and the closure of borders, among other things. The defendant denied it and stated that it is not logical to say that the economy was paralysed throughout the whole territory of Mozambique, because figures would have to be presented and an assessment made on macroeconomic grounds. Everything they did, he stated, was in the name of "inertia".

Asked whether, because of the protesters, the collection of tolls and taxes was prevented and whether this was related to him, he replied that not paying tolls was never synonymous with destroying the toll booths. It was a boycott, an initiative not to pay or use the road, according to each person's will.

h) Terror and deaths

Asked whether he was aware that the mobilisation caused terror in society, Venâncio Mondlane replied that this was never the purpose and that it was not his orders that took people's lives in the streets, referring to the annexes and reports in the case file. The mobilisations, he said, were aimed at demanding electoral truth and denouncing human rights violations. He recalled that, on returning from exile, he received families who had lost relatives, shot and killed, which, in his view, is proof that he was not the one who caused the terror.

i) Road blockades and the "shadow government"

One of the judges read excerpts about the blocking of roads and the right to freedom of movement. The defendant replied that he was reacting to a Facebook comment when he spoke of obstructing the roads and that, relating this to "inertia", it is obvious that having people with placards in the middle of a pavement ends up, in a way, obstructing passage, which is also part of "inertia".

Asked how he decreed the suspension of other public matters under the "shadow government", he said it was a political speech, in a relative sense: one can say, for example, that the government is finished, without that meaning it is removed from office.

4. New evidence and adjournment

The session was interrupted for a break and resumed at 2:35 p.m. On returning, the Public Prosecutor's Office suggested that its questions to the defendant be left for the following day, to also give the defence time.

The defence meanwhile submitted further evidence, which the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Assistente objected to receiving. Judge Carlos Mondlane, on behalf of the Court, ruled that, regardless of the timing, the defendant has the right to submit documents in criminal proceedings, so as not to restrict the right of defence, because what is at stake is allowing him to defend himself. In proceedings of this kind, he added, the defendant may always submit documents in his favour.

The session was closed and adjourned to the following day at around 3:00 p.m.

Next session and points to watch

- **Friday, 20 November 2026**, at the Supreme Court.
- Continuation of the questioning of the defendant, with questions from the Public Prosecutor's Office.
- The panel's decision on Shamir Mendes, after receiving the document from the Bar Association.
- The appropriate moment to validate or invalidate the audio and video recordings submitted by the Public Prosecutor's Office.
- Decisions on the request to exclude the phone records, the missing documents and the retention period of the case file, which were not addressed in this session.

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