DECIDE REPORT

Mozambique, 20th November 2026

FOURTH DAY OF VENÂNCIO MONDLANE'S TRIAL MARKED BY QUESTIONING FROM THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE



The trial of Venâncio Mondlane, leader of the ANAMOLA party, continued this Friday (20.11.2026) at the Supreme Court in Maputo. The session opened with the Court's decision on Shamir Mendes's status and was dominated by the Public Prosecutor's Office questioning the defendant, confronting him with videos and recordings of his live broadcasts. The hearing was adjourned at around 3:30 pm.

Summary of the Day

- • **Shamir Mendes without the right to speak:** based on information received stating that he is a first-stage trainee lawyer, the Court ruled that he may remain in the courtroom as an assistant to the defence, without the right to speak.

- **Statements outside the courtroom:** the Assisting Party (Assistente) complained about public statements describing the trial as political; the Presiding Judge replied that the courtroom is not the forum to deal with that matter.
- **Defendant confronted with videos:** the Public Prosecutor's Office showed excerpts from the live broadcasts; the defendant argued that they must be seen in context and pointed to cuts in at least one of the videos.
- **SERNIC expert summoned:** the Court granted the Public Prosecutor's Office's request to hear an expert from SERNIC (National Criminal Investigation Service) on the audio announcing a three-day shutdown, despite the defence's objection.
- **Rhetoric and metaphors:** the defendant maintained that the references to tear gas, to "the people in power" and to the "People's Court" were figures of political speech.

1. Opening of the session

The session began at 10:08 am. Before it started, there was a change of chairs involving Venâncio Mondlane, at the request of Rodrigo Rocha, because the chair in question had no armrests. The Court registry agreed to the request. This was followed by the signing of the minutes of the 18 November session, drawn up from the transcript.

2. Preliminary matters

a) Status of Shamir Mendes

The Presiding Judge stated that he had received a document according to which Shamir Mendes works in the office of one of the defence lawyers as a first-stage trainee lawyer. On the basis of that information, he ruled that Shamir Mendes may remain in the courtroom as an assistant to the defence team, without the right to speak, and may sit next to the other two defence lawyers and assist them in their work.

b) Public statements about the trial

Rodrigo Rocha asked for the floor to state that some figures outside the trial have been making statements that characterise the case as political and that may undermine the institutions. The Presiding Judge replied that the Supreme Court courtroom is not the place to deal with such matters, that other mechanisms exist for that purpose, and that everyone is free to express their views but must be aware of the consequences.

3. Questioning of the defendant by the Public Prosecutor's Office

a) Exceptions to the shutdowns

The Public Prosecutor's Office showed a video from one of the phases in which the demonstrations were stepped up, in which the defendant indicated that doctors and gravediggers should be allowed through so that burials could take place, and asked why he had accepted those exceptions. Venâncio Mondlane replied that there were sectors which, because of the usefulness of their activities, could not join the shutdown.

Confronted with a broadcast in which he mentioned calls from people who wished to hold graduation ceremonies, the defendant said that his guidance was for people to look at the context and weigh up what mattered most: the marches, human lives or a graduation ceremony, at a time when around 90 people had lost their lives. He stated that it was not his place to grant permission. Asked about the complaints referred to in the same recording, he said that his position was the one expressed in the broadcast — the value of human life — and that this point was included in the 20 points sent to then-President Filipe Nyusi as part of the national dialogue.

He further explained that a warning cited by the Public Prosecutor's Office, which directed the march towards the CNE (National Elections Commission) and the District Election Commissions and urged people not to go to work, was a message addressed to the staff themselves, as a way of protecting them and preventing "false flag" agents from exploiting the marches to cause damage. Asked what guidance he had given for professionals to report for work, he said he had given none, as he did not anticipate adverse situations.

b) Videos and expressions at issue

The Public Prosecutor's Office showed a video in which the defendant announced that Lúcia Ribeiro would carry out the "V8 activation" and stated that "they would never have peace". The defendant pointed out that the video has a cut of about 40 seconds and explained that the reference to peace related to peace of mind: whoever does wrong cannot lay their head on the pillow in peace.

Regarding an October broadcast in which he called for the country to be shut down, including on the day the results were announced, Venâncio Mondlane said it was a repetition of a campaign speech and pure rhetoric. As for the references to tear gas and bullets, he stated that only the police have such means and that the expressions were metaphors intended to raise awareness of the repression to which the people were being subjected. Asked whether the audience understood these metaphors, he replied that they did, because the population has its own wisdom.

c) Audio on the three-day shutdown

The Public Prosecutor's Office referred to a recording in which the defendant announces a three-day shutdown and asked what had been decided. Venâncio Mondlane said that on 30 June he had submitted an application for a more in-depth analysis of that audio, without receiving a reply, and that he was requesting the exact date of the recording, the phone used and the location, so that he could respond properly.

The Public Prosecutor's Office then asked for an expert from SERNIC to be called to testify about the recording, which the Presiding Judge granted. The defence objected, arguing that SERNIC works alongside the Public Prosecutor's Office, but the Presiding Judge stated that the Court has sovereign authority to call whomever it sees fit.

d) Fees, tolls and vehicles

Asked about his call for municipal fees not to be paid, the defendant explained that fees depend on each municipality and that, for example, anyone who does not go to the market does not pay the market fee; payment was, in that sense, optional. On tolls, he said that the non-payment message was aimed at the bosses and not the toll collectors, because it was the companies that needed to hear the message, and that the message was heeded, so much so that prices were lowered. As for the demonstrations at borders and transport corridors, he explained that the aim was to take advantage of the visibility those locations offer.

The Public Prosecutor's Office also showed a video in which the defendant asked people to switch off their vehicles in the middle of the road, with placards, go to work and come back later to collect them, and asked how other drivers were supposed to manage. The defendant asked for the preceding part of the video to be shown, in which he gives the example of people being attacked with gas in the streets, and explained that he had suggested people get out of their vehicles to protect their lives. He said the aim was visual: to make the reason for the struggle visible.

4. Questions after the break

After the break, the defendant was again questioned about the phrase that "the people would take power". He replied, as on the previous day, that the expression was meant to demonstrate the strength of the popular will: not the occupation of premises, but change through the force of the masses, as happened in the 2023 municipal elections. He was also questioned about the governors of the so-called "shadow government", a matter already addressed the previous day.

Regarding the "Law of Talion", he was confronted with decree no. 21, the so-called "people's decree", which, according to the prosecution, assigned the people the role of a court. The defendant confirmed that the decree was published, albeit without legal force, and explained that the "People's Court" referred to traditional and popular ethics and to conscience, adding that crime fell after the "Law of Talion". On the expression "sweep into hell", he repeated the explanation given the previous day.

Asked what he expected after the chaos, he said he hoped the very serious electoral irregularities would be acknowledged and reflected in the ruling. On the vehicles seized at Kenmare, in Moma, he stated that he preferred to present the Moma case as an example of good citizenship practice and of cooperation between economic operators and the population.

5. Adjournment

The session was adjourned at around 3:30 pm.

Next session and points to watch

- 23 November 2026, at 10 am, at the Supreme Court.
- Hearing of the SERNIC expert on the recording of the three-day shutdown.
- Continued questioning of the defendant by the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Assisting Party.
- Assessment of the validity of the audio and video recordings.
- Start of witness hearings.

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