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**38th Session of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Review of Mozambique**

4 May 2021

**Statement by Austria**

Thank you,

Austria welcomes the delegation of Mozambique to the UPR and thanks them for their report and presentation today.

We commend the government for its efforts to improve the human rights situation over the past years, including the progress achieved in the legislative and institutional field as well as the reinforced commitment to gender equality in line with recommendations received during the previous UPR cycle. Austria also commends Mozambique for extending a standing invitation to special procedures.

However, significant human rights challenges remain. Austria is concerned about the shrinking civil society space in Mozambique and the increasing pressure on human rights defenders, journalists and media outlets. We are also worried about the critical situation in the Cabo Delgado province and the heavy toll this conflict has on the civilian population, including the hundreds of thousands of IDPs.

[The COVID-19 pandemic also has its undoubted impact on Mozambique’s human rights situation and particularly on the situation of women and girls, who bear a large part of the burden. Thus, Austria would like to ask the Government about its strategies in place to ensure protection of the rights of women and girls and to respond to their specific needs.]

Austria offers the following recommendations:

1. To guarantee the right to freedom of opinion and expression and ensure that journalists and media outlets can perform their work without undue interference.
2. To consider the recommendations expressed by the EU’s election observation mission in 2019, which could lead to a significant strengthening of the democratic process.
3. To provide humanitarian assistance, including food, housing, education and health services to the growing number of IDPs.
4. To continue the reform measures specified in the July 2019 Report on Transparency, Governance and Corruption.
5. To ratify the Rome Statute of the ICC.