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Portugal

Solidarity with Mamadou Ba

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Mamadou Ba is a leader and spokesperson for the Portuguese association SOS Racismo, and an active voice in the public debate on the origins and realities of racism and is part of a generation of black activists who discuss the country's colonial responsibility with its long-lasting effects. His public exposure makes him a target for far-right organizations and he is often threatened by them. He needs your solidarity

Who is Mamadou Ba?

He is an anti-racist activist of Senegalese origin who has lived and worked in Portugal for 25 years where he obtained nationality. He is currently attending a doctoral program at a North-American university. A leader and spokesperson for the Portuguese association SOS Racismo, Mamadou Ba is an active voice in the public debate on the origins and realities of racism and is part of a generation of black activists who discuss the country's colonial responsibility with its long-lasting effects. His public exposure makes him a target for far-right organizations and he is often threatened by them. Because of these threats he once had to live under police protection.

What is happening?

On October 27, the Portuguese Judge Carlos Alexandre issued an instructive decision to pursue a defamation and injury complaint against the anti-racist activist Mamadou Ba, filed by the neo-Nazi Mário Machado. This means that Mamadou Ba will be taken to court to respond to the alleged defamation and injury of the neonazi and white supremacist Mário Machado.

What is the complaint about?

In 2020 the neonazi Mário Machado accused Mamadou Ba of calling him the "murderer" of Alcindo Monteiro. Alcindo Monteiro was a young black Portuguese citizen, born in Cape Verde, murdered in 1995 by a group of neonazi skinheads. Mário Machado was one of the group members that killed Alcindo Monteiro.

The indictment of the Portuguese public prosecutor, taken by judge Carlos Alexandre, that decided to take the anti-racist activist to court, questions, "Can a person carry an anathema all his life, imputing to him the participation, in any capacity, in a homicide, whose deed has already been introduced in court and object of a thorough judgment and with the judgment of the supreme court of justice, where he is acquitted of this specific crime, but condemned by another? And call that freedom of speech?". The judge further states, addressing Mamadou Ba, "What it cannot do is substitute itself for the courts and invoke the right to freedom of expression".

The neonazi is claiming for compensation for moral damages.

When will the trial take place?

The exact date for the trial is not yet known. It may take weeks or months but given the speed that the judge demonstrated in the pre-trial phase, we believe that the trial will be scheduled quickly.

What can happen if Mamadou is found guilty?

According to the Portuguese Penal code article 180 for defamation (of crimes against honour) “Whoever, addressing a third party, imputes to another person, even in the form of suspicion, a fact, or formulates a judgment about him, offensive to his honour or consideration, or reproduces such an imputation or judgment, is punished with imprisonment up to 6 months or a fine of up to 240 days.”

Likewise, the Penal code article 181 for Injury (of crimes against honour) “Whoever insults another person, imputing facts to him, even in the form of suspicion, or directing words, offensive to his honour or consideration, is punished with a prison sentence of up to 3 months or a fine of up to 120 days.” Considering the Portuguese jurisprudence, we expect that the possible scenario of conviction will be a fine.

Nonetheless, given that the judge himself considers that if the facts imputed to the accused are proved in the trial, the probability of Mamadou being convicted is greater than the probability of being acquitted. This would represent a moral and political victory of fascism over the anti-racist struggle, and the confirmation of the institutional racist bias of Portuguese justice.

Who is Mario Machado?

Mário Machado is a Portuguese neo-Nazi, founder and former leader of the Frente Nacional, a former member of the Hammerskins Portugal group and founder and former leader of the nationalist movement Nova Ordem Social, suspended in 2019.

Mário Machado's national notoriety as a nationalist, bonehead and far-right leader has been aided by the largely sensationalist coverage of the Portuguese press.

Mário Machado has a long criminal record, which includes racial discrimination, bodily harm, possession of illegal weapons, defamation, kidnapping and extortion. He was also a suspect in the murder of Alcindo Monteiro.

The murder of Alcindo Monteiro – the facts

On June 11, 1995, Mário Machado took part in actions of violence against several black Portuguese citizens in Bairro Alto, Lisboa. He was part of the group that murdered Alcindo Monteiro, a 27-year-old Portuguese citizen, born in Cape Verde. In the early hours of the morning, Alcindo was violently beaten in the Chiado area by a group of nationalists, who had come from a dinner commemorating the Day of the Race, the name given during the Portuguese Fascist Regime to the Day of Portugal, celebrated on June 10.

Alcindo Monteiro was found unconscious on Rua Garrett, being transported to the Hospital de São José, along with nine other victims of aggression, all black. Alcindo Monteiro died that night. At two-thirty in the morning, the police captured nine individuals (seven boys and two girls) near Cais do Sodré. Among these was Mário Machado, then active-duty soldier, 2nd Corporal of the Air Police of the Portuguese Air Force. On June 4, 1997, Machado was

sentenced to four years and three months in prison for his involvement in the death of Alcindo Monteiro.

Recently, and a few days after the court decided to take Mamadou Ba to court for defamation, the public Ministry accused Mário Machado of a crime of incitement to hatred and violence and of a crime of possession of a prohibited weapon. The accusation follows a murder case on August 23, 2019, next to a nightclub in the Algarve. The alleged author of the deadly shots was a young black boy. In the following days, Mário Machado used his social networks, publishing messages urging all far-right members to look for the suspect and hand him over to him, with the objective of taking justice into his own hands.

What can I do

Please send a short video, audio or written statement in support of Mamadou to boispelosnomes@gmail.com

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