

Lina Magaia was born on February 21, 1945 in Maputo (then Lourenco Marques), the capital of Mozambique.

She was one of a very few Mozambicans who managed to go to school. In 1961 she met Eduardo Mondlane, Frelimo's founding President, on a trip he made to Mozambique while working for the United Nations, and she was very inspired by his words and goals. In 1965 she was jailed by the Portuguese secret police, PIDE, for her political activities just prior to an attempt to leave Mozambique to join Frelimo. Her sentence was short - three months - because the authorities failed to find the incriminating evidence that a friend managed to remove just in time. On her release she remained in Lourenco Marques and continued her schooling.

In 1967 as one of the first women scholarship recipients, she went to Lisbon to study economics. Following the Portuguese coup in April 1974, she became very active in supporting Frelimo and Mozambique's independence. Shots were fired into the house in which she was staying, and her group received numerous bomb threats. Friends helped her leave Lisbon for Tanzania where she joined Frelimo and began her military training. She returned to Maputo with the army when it entered Mozambique in triumph at independence in June 1975. Still a member of the military, she was assigned to work with the Ministry of Education. Her status reverted to civilian in 1976. She joined the reserve army and continued to work in the Ministry helping to develop a new school system.

In 1980 the late President Samora Machel asked her to join the administration of the newly created Green Zones that were established on the outskirts of Maputo for the development of agricultural projects. Since then her work has continued to relate to the agricultural sector.

In 1982 she was asked to head the economic department of the sugar cane plantation and processing plant, Maragra in Manhice, Maputo Province. In 1985 she was transferred to the District of Manhice where she is responsible for the rural development projects for the district.

In addition to this work, Lina Magaia has been a journalist for many years. In particular, she has published articles in Tempo, Maputo's weekly magazine. Her book, Dumbe Nenque, Run for Your Life: Peasant Tales of Tragedy in Mozambique, was published by Africa World Press, Trenton, New Jersey in 1988. It is a moving account of the atrocities suffered by the people of Manhice, at the hand of the South Africa-backed Movement of National Resistance.

She lives in Manhice during the week, and returns at great risk to Maputo each weekend to be with her family. She has three children by her marriage, and an adopted son whose parents were victims of the atrocities.

Lina Magaia has worked with the Organization of Mozambican Women and is an outspoken defender of the liberation of women in Mozambique. She has travelled in Europe and elsewhere to raise funds and report first hand on the situation in Mozambique.