

Your Excellency the Minister of Home Affairs

Honourable President of the Court of Appeal of Lisbon

Your Excellencies the Secretaries of State

Respected Commander General of the National Republican Guard

Respected National Director of the Public Security Police

Your Excellency the Secretary General of the Ministry of Home Affairs

Respected National Director of the Immigration and Borders Service

Respected President of the National Authority of Civil Protection

Respected President of the National Authority of Road Safety

And through you I salute all entities here represented

The security forces represent a fundamental guarantee of the regular operation of a democratic State based on the rule of law and its institutions.

It is in these institutions that citizens put their trust and the expectations that their way of life, in liberty and peace, will not be affected by the reduction of their freedoms.

The security forces have known how to be up to those expectations, putting their lives and their honour at risk every day to protect us.

We must, as a People, be grateful to them.

This trust must be seen by the security forces, and it certainly will be by the Inspectorate General, not only as a sign of power but also, and especially, of responsibility. No activity of the State is out of public scrutiny.

It is essential that all police and military officers have accepted that authority, a fundamental component for the performance of their tasks, does not come from people but rather from the duties entrusted to them. This is how I always saw the judiciary system, to which I belong, and this is also the way I see the duties of the Inspector General.

Portugal is considered to be the third safest country of the world according to the Global Peace Index.

Among the European countries, Portugal comes in second place, only behind Iceland, which represents an extremely positive evolution.

This indicator surely represents one of the most significant and praiseworthy mentions for a country.

I am not talking only about an indicator that attracts investment, that attracts tourism, but mainly of a country of which we are proud of, where we can live in peace and tranquillity, respecting others in their diversity.

Portugal also stands as one of the countries where the perception of acceptance of migrants grew the most.

All this is due to an inclusive, generous, brave, peaceful people.

But it is also due, most certainly, to the action of the security forces and services who have shown to be able to face the challenges presented by a greater migratory pressure, an exponential growth of tourism, and the huge multicultural diversity that those phenomena entail.

But also focused on the historic moment we live, where unexpected menaces surface and under forms that call for all of us to reconsider on the use of force and tolerance towards the difference.

The security forces are bound to act in accordance with criteria of strict legality, both in their investigations and their intervention.

It is not only the ends that matter; is also matters the way to get there.

It is undeniable that in institutions with thousands of men and women there will always be cases in which the police or military officer fails in his or her action.

I am not unaware, nor do I try to hide what is obvious to the community: if a significant majority of the security forces and services has known how to be up to the citizens' expectations, there are cases in which that does not happen.

But those are pathological cases that do not represent the bulk of the institution.

Whenever that happens, all the ranks will want, and the Inspectorate General of Home Affairs will demand, the assessment of responsibilities and the establishment of the material truth, maintaining thus the good name and the normal operation of the institutions.

These cases must be the object of discussion regarding the search for a balance between the idea of the use of force as a last resource and the need to use it, always in a perspective of proportionality and legal framework.

We must not fear the subject of the use of force, as long as the respect for those principles is observed.

Paraphrasing Martin Luther King, “To say that force may sometimes be necessary is not a call to cynicism – it is a recognition of history, the imperfections of man and the limits of reason.”

I do not like the expression “police of polices”, so many times associated to the Inspectorate General, which seems to emphasize the punitive function that is ascribed to this Inspectorate.

What I wish, demand, but will also observe, is the respect of legality, rigour, responsibility and dignity.

All these principles shall guide the performance of police forces but are also imposed on the community regarding the way it relates with those that protect us.

Police and military officers are required to observe, in their daily activity, the strictest respect for the fundamental rights, without forgetting that they are also the subject of those fundamental rights.

Respected Commander General of the National Republican Guard, Respected National Director of the Public Security Police, Respected President of the National Authority of Emergency and Civil Protection, Your Excellency the Secretary General of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Respected National Director of the Immigration and Borders Service, Respected President of the National Authority of Road Safety, you have here a word of great respect and confidence from the Inspector General of Home Affairs.

The activity I begin today will be marked by exigency, rigour, independence, transparency and intransigency towards the compliance with the principles above mentioned.

Honourable Senior Judge of the Supreme Court of Justice Margarida Blasco, allow me a word of praise and great admiration for the work you so well developed as Inspector General of Home Affairs, knowing that it will not be easy to be your successor.

A final word for which I ask your indulgency, Mister Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs and all of you here present, to the Honourable President of the Court of Appeal of Lisbon, to the Honourable Deputy President, to the Honourable President of the 9th Section, where I came from, to the Delegate of the Bar Association of Cascais and to the Doyen of the Lawyers of Caiscais, reminding me that, above all, what matters are the persons.

Thank you very much, Your Excellency the Minister of Home Affairs, for the honour and confidence that this choice represents.

Thank you very much, entities and friends, that are with me in this new chapter of my life.

I will do my best not to let you down!

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