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Fear for safety

27 October 2000

NAMIBIA

Jose Domingos Sekunda, aged 63
Paulo Mendes
Herculano Jornal Satchanga
Bartolomeu Sanguewe

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of four men who may be expelled to Angola by the Namibian authorities. If returned, they risk being tortured or killed by the Angolan security forces.

The four men named above were arrested by the Namibian authorities on 17 and 18 October, and have been held without charge since. The authorities have declared them to be illegal immigrants and have ordered their removal to Angola. The men have had permanent residence in Namibia since the 1970s, when they fled from Angola, but are suspected of supporting *Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola* (UNITA), National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, an armed opposition group. Reports indicate that the Angolan security forces often commit human rights abuses against known or suspected UNITA supporters, and it is feared that the four men will be targeted if they are returned.

Jose Domingos Sekunda was arrested by the Namibian Police from his home in Rundu, northern Namibia, on 17 October. The police were reportedly accompanied by special police force officers and immigration officials. They searched Jose Domingos Sekunda's home without a warrant, and took him into custody without informing him or his family of the reasons for his arrest. The police said he would be held at Rundu police station, but his relatives later found out he had been taken to the Sarasungu Detention Camp, some two kilometres outside Rundu. He was allowed a brief visit on 19 October, but has not been allowed to see his family since. A court has ordered his immediate release, asking the authorities to show cause for his arrest by 10 November 2000. However, he remains in custody despite the court ruling.

Paulo Mendes, Herculano Jornal Satchanga and Bartolomeu Sanguewe were arrested on 18 October and are also held at the Sarasungu Detention Camp, despite a court ruling requesting the authorities to show cause for their detention by 31 October.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The detention of known or suspected UNITA supporters is part of an ongoing military campaign carried out by the Namibian and Angolan armies against UNITA in the Southern part of Angola.

In December 1999 the Namibian government permitted the Angolan army to attack UNITA forces on Namibian soil. Since then, there has been an increase in the number of human rights violations perpetrated by both Namibian and Angolan security forces. Unlawful detention and torture are common occurrences, and most victims are allegedly UNITA sympathizers or collaborators.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:

- expressing concern that Jose Domingos Sekunda, Paulo Mendes, Herculano Jornal Satchanga and Bartolomeu Sanguve are being held without charge and seeking assurances that they will not be forcibly returned to Angola;
- requesting to be informed of the reasons for their arrest, and for confirmation of where they are being held;
- calling for their immediate release unless they are promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence, and asking for them to be given access to their families, lawyers and necessary medical attention.

APPEALS TO:

The Hon. Jerry Ekandjo
Minister of Home Affairs
Ministry of Home Affairs
Windhoek
Republic of Namibia

Salutation:

Fax: + 264 61 22 3817

Lieut. Gen. L. Hangula
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Ausspanplatz
Windhoek
Republic of Namibia

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COPIES TO:

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and to diplomatic representatives of Namibia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 7 December 2000.