

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 42/04/98

This is a limited action. Please restrict appeals to 20 per section

10 June 1998

Further information on UA 161/98 (AFR 42/02/98, 21 May 1998) - Fear for safety of human rights activist / Possible "disappearance" and new concern: Forcible repatriation

NAMIBIA/ANGOLA Manuel Sahanda Neto, doctor of geology and Executive Director of the Angolan Human Rights League in Namibia

Manuel Sahanda Neto, an Angolan national with refugee status in Namibia, has not been seen since reportedly being forcibly returned to Angola. Amnesty International fears for his safety as it believes he may be at risk of ill-treatment and torture.

A statement made by the Namibian Minister of Interior on 27 May 1998 indicated that Manuel Sahanda Neto was handed over to the Angolan authorities on 19 May 1998, one day after he was arrested in Namibia.

It was also reported that files belonging to The Angolan Human Rights League (LADH), of which Manuel Neto was Director, were handed over to the Angolan authorities at the same time. The LADH is a recently established non-governmental organization in Namibia.

The Namibian authorities have claimed that the reason for Manuel Sahanda Neto's arrest and deportation was linked to his human rights activities which they claimed was a threat to their national security -- despite the peaceful and non-violent nature of his work. The Namibian Home Office had reportedly informed him, just prior to his arrest, that his directorship of the LADH was incompatible with his refugee status and that they feared he may use his position to criticize the Angolan Government.

The reported forcible return apparently took place despite a High Court injunction, taken out on 19 May in the capital Windhoek, blocking such a move.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters TO THE ANGOLAN AUTHORITIES, in Portuguese or in your own language:

- expressing concern that Manuel Sahanda Neto has not been seen since his deportation to Angola at Namibia's Oshikango Border Post on 19 May 1998;
- requesting information as to his current whereabouts and seeking urgent assurances that he will be safeguarded against any form of ill-treatment or torture;
- asking that the reason for his arrest and place of detention be made immediately known;
- calling for his immediate and unconditional release, unless he is promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

APPEALS TO: (Please note that fax tones to Angola are obtainable on an erratic basis. The following message may be heard "the number you have dialled has not been recognized, please check and try again" at odd times but may work some moments later).

President

José Eduardo dos Santos
Presidente da República

Futungo de Belas
Luanda, República de Angola
Telegrams: President dos Santos, Luanda, Angola
Faxes: + 242 2 33 18 85
Salutation: Sua Excelência / Your Excellency

Minister of Interior
Sua Excelência André Santana Pitra "Petroff"
Ministro do Interior
Ministério do Interior
Avenida 4 de Fevereiro
Luanda, República de Angola
Telegrams: Ministro do Interior, Luanda, Angola
Faxes: + 242 2 39 25 32
Salutation: Sua Excelência / Your Excellency

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Sua Excelência Venâncio da Silva Moura
Ministro das Relações Exteriores
Ministério das Relações Exteriores
Palácio do Comércio
Avenida Comandante Gika
Luanda, República de Angola
Telegrams: Ministro das Relações Exteriores
Faxes: + 244 2 39 32 46
Salutation: Sua Excelência / Your Excellency

TO THE NAMIBIAN AUTHORITIES, in English or in your own language:

- expressing concern at the arrest and subsequent deportation to Angola of Manuel Sahanda Neto on 19 may 1998, where he is at risk of torture and ill-treatment;
- reminding the Namibian authorities to respect their international commitment not to forcibly return refugees to a country where they could face human rights violations;
- calling for an independent inquiry into his arrest and deportation.

President of Namibia
His Excellency Dr Sam Nujoma
Office of the President
State House
Windhoek, Republic of Namibia
Faxes: + 264 61 22 1780 / 61 22 1770
Salutation: Dear President Nujoma

Minister of Home Affairs
Hon. Jerry Ekandjo
Minister of Home Affairs
Ministry of Home Affairs
Windhoek, Republic of Namibia
Faxes: + 264 61 22 3817
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:
Jornal de Angola, CP 1313, Luanda, Angola
Faxes: + 244 2 333342

Agora: Rua Francisco A. Pinto n°6, 2°andar, n°21, Luanda, Angola

Faxes: + 244 2 323477

Folha 8: Rua Conselheiro Júlio Vilhena n°24, 5°andar, Apt.19, Luanda, Angola

Faxes: + 244 2 392289

and to diplomatic representatives of Namibia and Angola accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 22 July 1998.