



To: Health Professional Network
From: Health and Human Rights Team
Date: 29 January 2010

Health Professional Action
Denial of medical care for Zeferino Rui Muatxingo and Muatxihina Muatximbala
and at least 17 other detainees in Conduege Prison
Angola

Amnesty International is seriously concerned about the health of Zeferino Rui Muatxingo and Muatxihina Muatximbala and at least 17 other detainees in Conduege Prison in Dundo, Lunda Norte Province in Angola. Zeferino Rui Muatxingo and Muatxihina Muatximbala are known to be sick as a result of unsanitary conditions and insufficient and inadequate food and water. Despite requests by their lawyer the prison authorities have refused to provide them with medical care. Amnesty International is concerned their health will continue to deteriorate if needed medical attention is not provided.

Amnesty International calls on the Angolan government to ensure these detainees have full and immediate access to appropriate medical services and sanitary conditions.

Background

At least 34 political detainees are currently being held in Conduege Prison in Dundo, the provincial capital of the diamond-rich north eastern province of Lunda Norte. Amnesty International does not have details of the conditions in Conduege Prison or the prisoners' state of health. However, the organisation has been informed that prison conditions are generally poor, with insufficient poor quality food and untreated water being provided. As a result, 19 detainees have been suffering from severe diarrhoea and blood loss, as well as malaria and pneumonia, for which they are not receiving medical treatment.

Zeferino Rui Muatxingo is reportedly suffering from diarrhoea with bloody stools, blood in his urine, and weight loss. He may also be suffering from malaria. He is not known to have received medical treatment.

Muatxihina Muatximbala is reportedly suffering from malaria, but is not receiving medical treatment.

Zeferino Rui Muatxingo, Muatxihina Muatximbala, and 17 other detainees are part of a group of 34 people arrested throughout April 2009 in several localities in Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul provinces. They are all members of the Comissão do Manifesto Jurídico Sociológico do Protectorado da Lunda Tchokwe (Commission

for a Legal Sociological Manifesto of Lunda Tchokwe Protectorate) in Lunda Norte Province, which calls for a federal state.

Zeferino Rui Muatxingo and three others were arrested on 1 April 2009 when they took a copy of their manifesto to Cuango (Lunda Norte) police station. They were arrested on the spot and reportedly beaten by police officers in order to obtain the names of other members of the Commission. Subsequently, 270 people were arrested throughout the province, most of whom were later released uncharged. However, 34 people including Zeferino Rui Muatxingo and Muatxihina Muatximbala were charged with crimes against the state, and they remain in detention. Their trial started in November 2009 but was suspended indefinitely. The case was remitted to the Supreme Court to resolve a legal irregularity.

Recommended action

a) Please write to the Angolan authorities below in Portuguese or your own language:

- explaining that you are a health professional concerned about human rights;
- expressing concern at reports that Zeferino Rui Muatxingo and Muatxihina Muatximbala and other detainees at Conduege prison are not receiving adequate medical treatment
- calling on the authorities to ensure that these detainees are treated humanely in detention, in accordance with human rights standards;
- urging the authorities to ensure that Zeferino Rui Muatxingo and Muatxihina Muatximbala are examined by independent doctors and receive full and immediate access to the necessary medical care, in accordance with provisions set out in the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.
- seeking information about the current state of the prisoners

Addresses

Minister of Justice

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Minister of Health

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Provincial Governor

Sua Excelência Gomes Maiato
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Sede do Governo da Província
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Fax: +244 252 640 12/645 53
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Copies to:

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Sua Excelência Assunção Afonso dos Anjos

Ministro das Relações Exteriores

Ministério das Relações Exteriores

Palácio do Comércio

Avenida Comandante Gika

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República de Angola

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Please also send copies to diplomatic representatives of the Angolan government accredited to your country.

If you receive no reply within eight weeks of sending your letter, please send a follow-up letter seeking a response. Please send copies of any letters you receive to the International Secretariat, attention of Health and Human Rights Team, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 0DW or e-mail: health@amnesty.org