

URGENT ACTION

TEACHERS UNION LEADER GET DEATH THREATS

On 27 February, the National Union of Higher Education Teachers (SINPES) in Angola started a strike demanding better working conditions and fulfillment of the promises made by the government. Since the beginning of the strike, union leaders - including general secretary Eduardo Peres Alberto- and their relatives have been the target of death threats. On 25 April, Eduardo Peres Alberto's daughter was attacked on the street by unidentified men who used a toxic chemical. The Angolan authorities must promptly, thoroughly, impartially, independently, transparently, and effectively investigate both the attack and death threats and ensure the Union leaders' right to unionize and strike is protected.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Minister of Justice and Human Rights

Marcy Cláudio Lopes

Casarão da Justiça, Rua 17 de Setembro

Gombota, Luanda, LU, Angola

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Dear Minister Marcy Lopes,

I am writing to express concern for the safety of **members of the National Union of Higher Education Teachers (SINPES)**, including its secretary general, **Eduardo Peres Alberto** and his daughter, **Maria Peres Alberto**.

On 27 February, the SINPES started a strike to demand better work conditions and fulfillment of promises made by the government to them in 2021.. On 28 March, Eduardo Peres Alberto received a text message - "You're going too far with the strike, then don't say you weren't warned." On the same day, his eldest daughter, Maria Peres Alberto, received a message warning her to "Tell [her] father to stop the strike otherwise we will attack". The next day, she received another message demanding she explain to her father and the union that "if he doesn't stop the strike, we will attack". After that, the same numbers sent other messages also promising to kill other union leaders of the strike. On 3 April, an envelope was left at Eduardo Peres Alberto's house in Luanda, Angola's capital, containing a photo of Maria Peres Alberto with a black cross. A week later, on 10 April, unidentified men broke the window of Eduardo Peres Alberto's house and sent a message to his daughter: "Did you see the scare? Next time we will kill." SINPES' secretary for information reported that he saw unidentified men surrounding his house for two days; on 1 May they unsuccessfully attempted to break into the house. The break-ins and all the threats were reported to the police, however, to date, no investigation has been launched, nor measures put in place to protect the union leaders, members and their relatives. On 25 April, Maria Peres Alberto was attacked in the street close to her home by unidentified individuals, who threw a toxic chemical canister at her which caused serious health complications, forcing her to be hospitalized for about 17 days. On 11 May, while in hospital, she received a text message from an unknown number stating that they knew where she was being hospitalized. Concerned about her safety and security, the doctors recommended that she continue her treatment at home.

Under international law and Article 51 of its Constitution, Angola has an obligation to respect, protect, promote, and fulfil the human rights of everyone including workers and to ensure that they realize their rights to unionize and strike without fear of harm and reprisals.

I urge you to carry out an effective investigation into the attack against Maria Peres Alberto and the death threats against her, Eduardo Peres Alberto, and other SINPES leaders, ensuring the suspected perpetrators are brought to justice in fair trials. I further urge you to immediately take all necessary steps to guarantee the protection and safety of all SINPES leaders and their families.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Eduardo Peres Alberto has been general secretary of the National Union of Higher Education Teachers (SINPES) since 2012. He holds a master's degree in history and bachelor's in political science. He is one of the most prominent faces of the *higher education teachers'* strike that started on 27 February.

SINPES first went on strike in November 2021 and culminated in the signing of a "Memorandum of Understanding" between the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Technology, Innovation, henceforth (MESCTI), and the National Union of *Higher Education Teachers'* (SINPES).

As the government did not fulfill the promises made, by deliberation of its general assembly, the higher education teachers' union decided to resume the strike in January 2022, which lasted 3 months. The same strike was interrupted and resumed a few times during the year, in shorter periods lasting a few days, in April, October and November 2022. During this period, there were negotiations with the government that apparently did not bring any solution to the challenges presented by the union, which led to the resumption of the strike on 27 February 2023, now marking 3 months of strike and stoppage of classes in public higher education institutions.

The higher education teachers strike has resulted in public higher education students, led by the student movement (MEA), to organize demonstrations against school fees and also demanding the government to solve the impasses with of college teachers so they can return to school. Some of these demonstrations have been repressed by the police.

Peaceful demonstrations and other forms of protest are repressed in Angola, often leading to arbitrary arrests, torture, and threats and intimidation of dissidents.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Portuguese

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 31 July 2023

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Eduardo Peres Alberto (He/his/him), Maria Peres Alberto (She/her), National Union of Higher Education Teachers (all)