

# URGENT ACTION

## HUNDREDS OF FAMILIES FACING FORCED EVICTION

**The authorities in the southern city of Lubango are planning to forcibly evict hundreds of families from their homes on 25 August. The families would be left destitute**

The Lubango city administrator sent a written notification on 29 June to the residents of the Arco Iris neighbourhood (also known as Dr António Agostinho Neto) in the city centre, of the intention to demolish their homes to build a new road, and ordered them to leave the area. It gave residents, some 750 families, 30 days to vacate the area and offered land some 14 km from the city centre for them to build new houses. It offered them no compensation or other form of assistance. That was the first time the residents heard about the local authority's plans.

The building of the new road is part of the Lubango city urban development plan which was drawn up by the Portuguese colonial administration but not carried out. After independence at the end of 1975, people began to build houses in the area unimpeded. Most residents have occupied the area for several decades.

The authorities announced on local radio on 1 August that they were extending the deadline for the families to vacate the area from 29 July to 25 August. This was in order to enable the local administration to complete the distribution of the plots of land, which had only started on 28 July. According to Arco Iris residents, they are to be relocated to an isolated area, some 14 km from the city centre, which has no public transport, social amenities such as schools and medical services, water, electricity or sanitation.

### **Please write immediately in Portuguese, English or your own language:**

- Calling on the authorities to halt the planned forced eviction in the Arco Iris neighbourhood in Lubango;
- Urging them to adopt a moratorium on all evictions until all necessary safeguards are put in place to ensure that evictions are carried out in accordance with international and regional human rights standards, including the development of a resettlement plan to provide adequate alternative housing to residents.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 SEPTEMBER 2011 TO:**

Minister of Urban Development and Construction

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Ministro de Urbanismo e Construção  
Ministério de Urbanismo e Construção  
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Salutation: Sua Excelência/ Excellency

Huíla Provincial Governor

Isaac Francisco Maria dos Anjos  
Governador Provincial  
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Lubango City Administrator

Manuel Capenda  
Administrador Municipal do Lubango  
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**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country**

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Forced evictions are those carried out without adequate notice and consultation with those affected, without legal safeguards and without assurances of adequate alternative accommodation.

International law, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Charter), to which Angola is a State Party, prohibits Angola from carrying out forced evictions, and obliges it to protect people from forced evictions. Evictions may only be carried out as a last resort, once all other feasible alternatives to eviction have been explored in genuine consultation with affected communities. The authorities must ensure that they are not carried out in particularly bad weather, during the night or in the absence of the home occupant without their prior consent, and that no one is made homeless as a result of the evictions. Adequate alternative housing and compensation for all losses must be made available to those affected prior to eviction. These requirements apply to all settlements, regardless of their tenure status, including informal settlements. Even when people do not have legal tenure, government authorities may not forcibly evict people from their homes.

In their preparation for the demolition of the Arco Iris neighbourhood in Lubango, the Angolan authorities have failed to put in place legal protections and other safeguards from forced eviction, such as genuine consultation with communities to identify alternatives to evictions and resettlement options; adequate and reasonable prior notice and full information on the proposed evictions; access to effective legal remedies. They have failed to provide adequate alternative accommodation and compensation, all of which is required under international law. The authorities are planning to carry out the evictions during the rainy season, in violation of international standards.

The authorities have offered land to the Arco Iris residents for them to build their new houses elsewhere. However, the distribution of plots of land by itself is not sufficient to render an eviction lawful. Evictions must not render individuals or communities homeless. As such, all resettlement measures such as construction of home, provision of water and allocation of land and sites must be consistent with internationally recognized human rights principles, and completed before communities are moved from their homes.

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