



SOUTHERN AFRICA
LITIGATION CENTRE



PUBLIC STATEMENT

Index: AFR 12/1673/2015

18 May 2015

Update: Angola – Conditional release of Arão Bula Tempo and continued pre-trial detention of José Marcos Mavungo

On 13 May 2015, human rights defender Mr **Arão Bula Tempo** was conditionally released pending trial after two months of imprisonment solely for his involvement in the organisation of a peaceful protest against human rights violations and bad governance in Cabinda. As a condition for his release, he must not leave the country without authorization. Mr **José Marcos Mavungo**, who was also arrested for planning the protest continues to be detained for investigation. His health remains unstable. Both human rights defenders are accused of committing crimes against the security of the state.

Arão Bula Tempo is a human rights lawyer and President of the Provincial Council of the **Angolan Bar Association** in Cabinda. Since 1998, he has been actively denouncing human rights violations, including arbitrary detention, torture and summary executions. José Marcos Mavungo was the Vice-president of the Cabinda-based, government-banned human rights organisation **Mpalabanda Associação Cívica de Cabinda (ACC)**.

On 20 March 2015, Arão Bula Tempo and José Marcos Mavungo were charged with “collaboration with foreigners to constrain the Angolan state” and “rebellion”, respectively, both considered crimes against the security of the state. These accusations are in relation to a peaceful demonstration to denounce corruption, human rights violations and bad governance in Cabinda, which was scheduled to take place on the day of their arrest. Conviction on the charge of rebellion is punishable by up to 15-years' imprisonment, whilst the charge of collaboration with foreigners carries a potential 10-year sentence.

The human rights defenders were initially detained on 14 March 2015, in the province of Cabinda. José Marcos Mavungo was arrested for planning the demonstration, at a Church compound as he was going to his regular morning mass. Arão Bula Tempo was arrested by security forces in Cabinda near the border with Congo Brazzaville, reportedly for having invited journalists from the Republic of the Congo to cover the demonstration.

The undersigned human rights organizations welcome the provisional release of Arão Bula Tempo,

but express disappointment for the conditions imposed on his release. The organizations remain concerned by the continued detention of José Marcos Mavungo and the pending charges against the two human rights defenders. We reiterate our call to the authorities in Angola to immediately and unconditionally release José Marcos Mavungo, and to drop all charges against both he and Arão Bula Tempo, as they are motivated solely by their legitimate work in the defence of human rights.

Co-signing organisations in alphabetical order:

1. Amnesty International (AI)
2. Front Line Defenders
3. International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)
4. SADC Lawyers' Association (SADCLA)
5. Southern Africa Litigation Centre (SALC)