

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, OMUNGA and OHI

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Angola: Amnesty International, Omunga and Organização Humanitária Internacional (OHI) urge Angolan authorities to respect the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly

Amnesty International and the Angolan NGOs Omunga and OHI are deeply concerned with the arbitrary arrest and detention for up to 7 hours of more than 30 peaceful activists as well as OHI's driver on 23 July, in Benguela, Angola.

A peaceful demonstration to demand for effective measures against inflation in Angola was scheduled to take place on 23 July. On that day, around 12PM, OHI's driver was transporting some youth activists to the demonstration when he was stopped by police officers. The driver and 22 youth activists who were in the vehicle were then taken to the Municipal Police Command of Benguela where they were detained. The vehicle, its keys and documents belonging to the driver were confiscated.

Three hours later, 13 more activists were arrested where the peaceful demonstration was supposed to start and taken to the same police station. Around 7PM, all the detained activists and OHI's driver were released. On 26 July, the seized objects and documents, except for the vehicle, were returned to the activists and the driver.

Having been notified in advance by the youth activists, and prior to it taking place, the Provincial Government of Benguela refused to authorize the demonstration without any justification, in violation of the right to peaceful assembly.

The organizations are now calling on the Provincial Government of Benguela and on the Angolan national authorities to end the practice of arbitrary arrests, harassment and intimidation of peaceful activists and to uphold the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, in line with its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and

Political Rights (ICCPR). In addition, those found to be responsible for arbitrary arrests and detention of peaceful activists must be held to account.

Background:

On 5 July, Angolan youth activists notified the Provincial Government of Benguela of the intention to carry out the peaceful demonstration on 23 July. Omunga publicly supported the initiative. However, on 14 July, the Provincial Government denied authorization for the demonstration without any further justification.

In response, Omunga wrote an open letter to provincial authorities informing them that not only would Omunga participate in the demonstration, but the human rights defender from Cabinda, José Marcos Mavungo, who would be visiting Benguela on that date, would also participate.

On 22 July, the day before the planned demonstration, six people dressed in civilian clothes suspected to be government officials' removed two posters that were hung outside Omunga's office. The posters read: "The population is not responsible for inflation" and "Demand quality of life". These six people then reportedly got into a government marked car and left.