

URGENT ACTION

SIXTY-TWO ACTIVISTS, PROTESTERS ARBITRARILY HELD

Sixty-two people including activists from the Independence Movement of Cabinda (Movimento Independista de Cabinda – MIC) together with their family members and colleagues, were arrested between 28 January and 1 February in Cabinda, Angola. They were arrested for their involvement in peaceful protests. They are being arbitrarily detained at Cabinda Province civil prison.

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

Minister of Justice and Human Rights
Francisco Manuel Monteiro de Queiroz
Ministério da Justiça e dos Direitos Humanos
Rua 17 de Setembro,
Luanda, Angola

Email: francisco.queiroz@minjus.gov.ao or portal.minjusdh.contactos@gmail.com

Dear Minister Francisco Manuel Monteiro de Queiroz,

Angolan security forces arrested eight youth activists from the Independence Movement of Cabinda (Movimento Independista de Cabinda – MIC) at their homes on 28 January in Cabinda Province, Angola. They were preparing leaflets in readiness for a peaceful protest to mark the 134th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Simulambuco scheduled for 1 February.

The next day, 20 people, including family members and colleagues of the detained youth activists, were arrested by the police while peacefully protesting to demand their release in front of the Service of Criminal Investigation building also in Cabinda.

Protesters took to the streets of Cabinda on 1 February to celebrate the anniversary of the Treaty of Simulambuco and to reiterate calls for Cabinda's independence from Angola. They also called for the release of those arrested previously. The Provincial Police arrested 34 protesters during the protest.

The 62 people remain arbitrarily detained at the Cabinda Province civil prison. The Public Prosecutor has requested their pre-trial detention and charged them with the crimes of criminal association (article 8 of 3/14 Law), rebellion (article 21 of 23/10 Law), insult (ultraje) of the State (article 25 of 23/10 Law) and public disturbance and resistance (articles 185 and 186 of Penal Code). The crackdown by the authorities on peaceful protesters in Cabinda undermines the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in Angola. I therefore urge you to:

- Ensure the authorities immediately and unconditionally release the 62 protesters detained solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly;
- Ensure that activists in Cabinda are guaranteed their right to carry out human rights activities without fear of reprisals and unlawful restrictions.

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Treaty of Simulambuco was signed on 1 February 1885. It gave Cabinda the status of a protectorate of the Portuguese Crown.

On 7 January, the MIC Secretary sent a communication to the President of the Republic of Angola, João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço and copies to the Provincial Government of Cabinda, the Provincial Police Command, the Public Prosecutor of the Republic, to Angolan political parties and other authorities to inform about the peaceful protest scheduled for 1 February. The MIC asked for the Angolan Police to be present at the protest to ensure the safety of protesters.

Cabinda is located on a sliver of land sandwiched between the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Congo Republic. It is internationally recognized as part of Angola and produces most of the country's oil export. Separatist groups have been seeking independence or autonomy from Angola for over 20 years. Government attempts to negotiate with representatives of the Cabindan separatist groups have not been successful.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Portuguese

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 26 03 2019

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Cabinda Protesters (They, Their)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: None