

URGENT ACTION

TRIAL AGAINST 15 YOUTH ACTIVISTS SET TO START

15 Angolan youth activists who have been in detention for more than four months in Angola are set to stand trial between 16 and 20 November. Luaty Beirão, one of the activists, ended his hunger strike on 27 October after 36 days.

The **15 youth activists** were arrested and detained by Angolan security forces between 20 and 24 June in Luanda in connection with a peaceful meeting they attended to discuss politics and governance concerns under Angola's President, José Eduardo dos Santos. They were formally charged on 16 September with preparing a rebellion and a coup attempt against the president, but their lawyers were only officially informed of the charges on 30 September. The activists were therefore held in pre-trial detention for longer than 90 days, as is permitted by law. These charges against them are termed as crimes against the security of the state and each carries a penalty of up to 3 years in jail or the corresponding fine.

Some of the activists went on hunger strike on 20 September for a few days to protest against their illegal detention. **Luaty Beirão** was on hunger strike for 36 days and his health deteriorated during that time. He was transferred to a private clinic, known as Clínica Girassol, in the country's capital Luanda on 15 October. On 20 October, he expressed his desire to be transferred back to the hospital prison of São Paulo to be closer to the other 14 detained activists. He ended his hunger strike on 27 October and was transferred back to the prison hospital of São Paulo on 3 November. In a public letter, co-signed by the 15 activists on 27 October, there are allegations that some activists have been severely beaten by prison officials, subjected to other ill-treatment and denied medical care while in detention. The trial against the 15 activists is scheduled to take place between 16 and 20 November at the Luanda Provincial Tribunal.

Amnesty International considers the 15 youth activists to be prisoners of conscience.

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

- Calling on the Angolan authorities to immediately and unconditionally release the 15 youth activists as they are prisoners of conscience, imprisoned solely for the peaceful exercise of their rights;
- Urging them to ensure that they are not subjected to any torture or other ill-treatment while in custody, and have access to adequate medical care;
- Urging them to end the practice of arbitrary arrests, harassment and intimidation of activists, upholding the rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly and expression.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 18 DECEMBER 2015 TO:

Minister of Justice and Human Rights

Rui Jorge Cameiro Manguera
Ministry of Justice and Human Rights
Rua 17 Setembro, No. 32
CP 1986
rui.manguera@minjus.gov.ao
Fax: +244 222 330 327
Luanda, Republic of Angola

Salutation: A sua Excelência / Your Excellency

General Prosecutor of Angola

João Maria Moreira de Sousa
Office of the General Prosecutor
Rua 17 Setembro
Largo do Amor, Vila Alice
Luanda, Republic of Angola
Salutation: Exmo. Dr. / Dear Prosecutor

And Copies to:

Director

Ana Celeste Januario
National Center of Human Rights
Email: ana.januario@minjusdh.gov.ao
and celestejanuario5@yahoo.com
Fax: 244 222 333 407

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the third update of UA 143/15. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr12/2632/2015/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Dissent is frequently dealt with repressively, and often violently, by the Angolan authorities. Amnesty International has documented how the freedom of expression and peaceful assembly have been unlawfully restricted in Angola in its report *Punishing Dissent: Suppression of Freedom of Association and Assembly in Angola* (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AFR12/004/2014/en/>).

Some of those who have challenged the government of President José Eduardo dos Santos have been subjected to extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and torture. Despite the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly being clearly enshrined in the country's constitution and in several international treaties that Angola has signed and ratified, violations of these rights continue to occur.

Angolan activists Laurinda Gouveia and Rosa Conde were also charged with preparing a rebellion and a coup attempt against the president alongside the 15 youth activists on 16 September, but are not in detention.

Three activists are facing additional charges: Manuel Nito Alves for illegal change of name (penalty: a fine or one month imprisonment), Luaty Beirão for falsification of documents (penalty: 2-8 years imprisonment) and Osvaldo Caholo for theft of documents (penalty: 2-8 years imprisonment and a fine).

The United Nations special rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst, on 23 October issued a statement urging the Angolan government to release the activists. This statement was supported by the UN special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai; the UN special rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, David Kaye; the UN special rapporteur on torture, Juan Méndez; and the chair of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Seong-Phil Hong.

Names: Henrique Luaty da Silva Beirão, Manuel Chivonde (Nito Alves), Nuno Álvaro Dala, Afonso Mahenda Matias (Mbanza Hanza), Nelson Dibango Mendes dos Santos, Hitler Jessy Chivonde (Hitler Samussuko), Albano Evaristo Bingocabingo, Sedrick Domingos de Carvalho, Fernando António Tomás (Nicolas o Radical), Arante Kivuvu Italiano Lopes, Benedito Jeremias, José Gomes Hata (Cheick Hata), Inocência António de Brito, Osvaldo Sérgio Correia Caholo and Domingos da Cruz.

Gender m/f: male

Further information on UA: 143/15 Index: AFR 12/2822/2015 Issue Date: 6 November 2015