

PUBLIC

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16 March 2006

Further Information on UA 303/05 (AFR 12/005/2005, 2 December 2005) and follow-up (AFR 12/001/2006, 25 January 2006) - Forced Evictions/Use of Excessive Force

ANGOLA

More than 600 families

Luís Araújo (m), human rights defender

11 others including members of SOS-Habitat (housing rights NGO)

About 600 families were forcibly evicted from their homes in four neighbourhoods of the capital, Luanda, on 13 March. The evictions were carried out violently, without prior consultation, and without due process of law. This is the fourth forcible eviction carried out in the area in recent months, leaving thousands of people homeless and without shelter.

Amnesty International has learnt that on 11 March, António Manuel, Head of the Fiscal Communal Administration of the Futungo de Belas district (*Fiscalizacão da Administração Comunal do Futungo de Belas*) of Luanda, accompanied by members of the National Police, visited the Residents' Commission for the neighbourhoods of Cambamba I, Cambamba II, Banga Wé and 28 de Agosto. António Manuel told the Residents' Commission that their communities had until the following night to collect their belongings and leave their homes, as houses in the area would be demolished on 13 March. António Manuel advised the residents that the evictions were necessary in order to enable the private housing project *Nova Vida* (New Life) to commence the second phase of their housing programme.

At about 9.30am on 13 March, members of the National Police and guards from a private security company arrived in Cambamba II with a bulldozer. The residents, mainly women, children and the elderly, stood in front of their houses and refused to move. When the director of the *Nova Vida* housing project arrived in his car, some of the residents allegedly threw stones at his car. Some residents threw objects at the police and guards, who fled the scene. They returned at about 11.30am, with some 100 heavily-armed police officers. The police officers reportedly got out of their cars firing into the air and on the ground. They beat and kicked residents of Cambamba II, including a pregnant woman, who apparently started haemorrhaging as a consequence. A six year-old boy was shot in the knee. Four women and a man were arrested.

Evictions carried out in the neighbourhoods of Cambamba I and Banga Wé were accompanied by similar violence. In Cambamba I a guard from a private security company, armed with an automatic weapon, reportedly shot in a semi-circle around the feet of a young boy as he tried to flee. The security guard and seven police then encircled the boy, beat him and kicked him. The police interrogated and threatened members of the international organization Oxfam, reportedly because they were taking photographs of the events. A number of women were arrested. Those who resisted arrest were pushed to the ground and beaten, including a woman who was carrying a baby on her back. The police also arrested two members of SOS-Habitat, including the coordinator, Luís Araújo, but released them shortly afterwards, reportedly after intervention by members of the United Nations Office for Human Rights in Luanda.

According to reports, workers from the *Nova Vida* project returned to the four neighbourhoods on 15 March, accompanied by members of the National Police, apparently in an effort to flatten all remaining homes and expel any residents who had returned. All those arrested have now been released.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Forced evictions took place on 24 and 30 November 2005, and on 22 December 2005, in Cambamba I, Cambamba II, 28 de Agosto, and Banga Wé. Most of those who were evicted later returned to the area, and

some put up shelters. The land where Cambamba I and II and Bairro 28 de Agosto are sited was allocated to the *Nova Vida* project without due legal process, without consulting the residents and without any effort to provide alternative adequate housing to those unable to provide for themselves. Under international law, evictions carried out without consultations, without due process of law and assurances of adequate alternative accommodation, are grave violations of human rights. The Luanda Provincial Governor, Job Capapinha, has set up a commission of inquiry into the forced evictions. However, the purpose of this commission appeared to be only to investigate the involvement of provincial government officials in the illegal sale of land and the granting of land permits.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Portuguese or your own language:

- expressing concern that the authorities in Luanda have continued to carry out forced evictions, including the forcible eviction of some 600 families on 13 March;
- urging the authorities to provide adequate alternative accommodation to those unable to provide for themselves as a matter of urgency;
- expressing concern at the reports that the police made unnecessary or excessive use of force and firearms during the evictions, made arbitrary arrests, and beat people, including a pregnant woman and a woman carrying a baby on her back;
- expressing concern that guards from a private security company (who are not subject to the same training and disciplinary procedures as professional police) were permitted to carry out police functions despite the prohibition of this under Angola's Law 19/92;
- expressing concern that the commission of enquiry set up by the Luanda Provincial Governor does not seem to be intended to investigate the conformity of these evictions with national and international human rights treaties or the manner in which the forced evictions were carried out, including the use of excessive force by the police;
- calling for a full and independent inquiry into the reports of excessive force by the police, for the results of the inquiry to be made public and for those responsible for human rights violations to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior

Sua Excelência General Roberto Leal Monteiro

Ministro do Interior, Ministério do Interior, Avenida 4 Fevereiro No. 106, Luanda, República de Angola

Fax: + 244 222 39 51 33/ 39 10 49

Salutation: Excelência

Minister of Urban Planning and Environment

Sua Excelência Diakumpuna Sita José, Ministro de Urbanismo e Ambiente,

Ministério de Urbanismo e Ambiente, Avenida 4 de Fevereiro, 25, Luanda, República de Angola

Fax: via the Ministry of Interior (Mark: "Por favor entregar a Sua Excelência o Ministro de Urbanismo e Ambiente")

Salutation: Excelência

Luanda Provincial Governor

Sua Excelência Job Capapinha

Governador Provincial, Palácio do Governo Província, Largo Irene Cohen, Luanda, República de Angola

Fax: via the Ministry of Interior (Mark: "Por favor entregar a Sua Excelência o Governador Provincial")

Salutation: Excelência

National Police Commander

Exmo. Sr José Alfredo Ekuikui, Comandante Geral da Polícia, Comando Geral da Polícia,

Avenida 4 de Fevereiro, Luanda, República de Angola

Fax: + 244 222 392 532

Salutation: Exmo. Sr.

Attorney General

Sua Excelência Dr. Augusto da Costa Carneiro, Procurador Geral da República,

Procuradoria Geral da República, Rua 17 Setembro, Luanda, República de Angola

Fax: + 244 222 333 170/ 172

Salutation: Excelência

COPIES TO:

Minister of Justice

Sua Excelência Manuel Aragão, Ministro da Justiça, Ministério da Justiça, Rua 17 Setembro, Luanda, República de Angola

Fax: + 244 222 330 327; +244 222 33 81 75

and to diplomatic representatives of Angola accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 27 April 2006.