

Public



To: Health Professional Network

From: Amnesty International

Date: 14 October 2010

**Health Professional Action
Death of Muatxihina Chamumbala
in Conduege Prison and concern for the remaining 32 prisoners**

Angola

UPDATE 2

(Update to: AFR 12/002/2010, 27 January 2010 and AFR 12/ and AFR 12/10/2010, of 11 August 2010)

Amnesty International has learned of the death of Muatxihina Chamumbala in hospital on 3 October 2010. Muatxihina Chamumbala was due to be tried on 12 October 2010, together with 33 others, on charges of crimes against the state, though these have not been specified. They were being held in Conduege Prison in Dundo, Lunda Norte, province in Angola.

Muatxihina Chamumbala had been ill since his imprisonment in April 2009 and his health continued to deteriorate in January 2010 after he was reported to have a distended abdomen. In early July 2010 he was taken to the Lunda Norte Provincial hospital where he had fluid drained from his abdomen. He was discharged after three days and returned to the prison, where conditions were not conducive to a recovery, and he remained ill. He did not receive further treatment.

On 28 September his condition became very serious and he was taken to the Lunda Norte Provincial Hospital suffering from acute diarrhoea and passing blood in the stools. He died in hospital at around 8 pm on 3 October. According to the information received by Amnesty International, he was buried in a common grave on 5 October, several hours before his family's arrival in Dundo.

In August 2010, following publication of a public statement and Medical Action on behalf of this group of detainees, Amnesty International was informed that the former minister of interior and his deputy visited Conduege prison. According to the information received, the minister promised to ensure the supply of medicines and treated water to the prison, but, apparently, this has not happened.

It was reported that in mid-September the authorities announced that the detainees were going to be transferred to another prison, in Catanda, some 40 km. from Dundo. However, although it is a newer prison, reports indicate it does not have access to electricity or running water.

Amnesty International has also been informed that another political detainee, Armando António Muagingo became seriously ill in September with cerebral malaria, diarrhoea and respiratory problems. On 13 September he was taken to the Lunda Norte Provincia Hospital where he spent several days in the intensive care unit. He was discharged from hospital some two weeks later and taken back to prison.

Amnesty International remains concerned about the health of this group of detainees who continue to be intermittently sick and do not appear to receive medical treatment unless they become seriously ill. Unsanitary conditions at Conduege prison, as well as the inadequate provision of food and water persist, further aggravating their health. Unless prison conditions improve and prompt medical treatment is provided, their health will continue to deteriorate.

Recommended action

Please continue to write to the Angolan authorities below in Portuguese or your own language:

- explaining that you are a health professional concerned about human rights;
- regretting the death of Muatxihina Chamumbala, whose health had been deteriorating rapidly since January 2010 and who did not received adequate medical treatment;
- expressing further regret at reports that Muatxihina Chamumbala's body was buried before his family had a chance to see his body and to say their goodbyes;
- asking whether an autopsy was carried out to establish the cause of his death in accordance with international human rights standards.
- calling for an investigation into the death of Muatxihina Chamumbala in accordance with international human rights standards, including the Body of Principles for the protection of all persons under any form of detention or imprisonment. Article 34 of the Body of Principles states, "Whenever the death or disappearance of a detained or imprisoned person occurs during his detention or imprisonment, an inquiry into the causes of death or disappearance shall be held by a judicial or other authority, either on its own motion or at the instance of a member of the family of such a person or any person who has knowledge of the case..."
- expressing concern at reports that prison conditions in Conduege Prison have not improved and continue to make prisoners ill;
- expressing concern at reports that the detainees are not receiving prompt and adequate medical treatment and that they are only treated when they become seriously ill;
- urging the authorities to ensure that all detainees receive full and immediate access to the necessary medical care, in accordance with provisions set out in the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners;
- urging the authorities to improve the conditions in which the detainees are held, including providing adequate and regular food, potable water, adequate sanitary facilities;

Addresses

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Please also send copies to diplomatic representatives of the Angolan government accredited to your country.

If you receive no reply within six weeks of sending your letter, please send a follow-up letter seeking a response. Please send copies of any letters you receive to the International Secretariat, attention of Health in Detention Team, Special Thematic Projects Unit, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 0DW or e-mail: health@amnesty.org