

URGENT ACTION

FAMILIES FORCIBLY EVICTED AND LEFT HOMELESS

On Tuesday 9 April, scores of families were forcibly evicted and had their homes demolished by city authorities in Menongue city, Angola. Thousands more in the city are at risk of being evicted.

On 9 April, the Menongue City Administrator arrived at Aeroporto Comandante Kwenha neighbourhood in Menongue, a city in the South-eastern province of Kuando Kubango, Angola. He told the community they had to leave the area. He stated that the land they live on is reserved for use by the State which has to ensure that there are no residences within 200 metres of the nearby airport. He then stated that there is a government plan for the rest of the land but did not elaborate further. Later that day the Administrator returned to the neighbourhood reportedly with police officers, agents from the State Intelligence and Security Service and a demolition vehicle. The driver of the vehicle was instructed to demolish about 40 houses while the police ensured the protection of its driver and the Administrator.

Police reportedly used armed force, including shots, against those who protested the destruction of their homes. During the demolitions eight individuals were arrested for taking photos of the demolitions and for breaking the windows of the vehicle. Six of the protestors were released within two days and two remained in detention until 15 April.

The families were not offered any form of compensation or alternative land or housing and remain homeless and destitute. The Administrator reportedly threatened the families with greater damages if they were still in the area when the authorities returned. No official notice or opportunities for genuine consultation were provided to the affected families.

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

- Expressing concern that scores of families were forcibly evicted and rendered homeless in the Aeroporto Comandante Kwenha neighbourhood;
- Urging the authorities to ensure that all those forcibly evicted are provided with effective remedies including adequate alternative accommodation and compensation for their losses where applicable;
- Requesting that the authorities halt all further forced evictions in Menongue and to adopt a moratorium on all mass evictions until all necessary safeguards are put in place, to ensure that evictions are carried out in accordance with international and regional human rights standards, including the development of a resettlement plan to provide adequate alternative housing where applicable.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 MAY 2013 TO:

Minister of Urban Development and Construction

Fernando Fonseca

Ministro de Urbanismo e Construção

Ministério de Urbanismo e Construção

Avenida 4 de Fevereiro

Luanda

República de Angola

Fax: +244 222 310517

(Say "queria mandar um fax" if someone answers)

Email: geral@minua.gov.ao

Salutation: Sua Excelência/ Excellency

Kuando Kubango Provincial Governor

Francisco Higinio Lopes Carneiro

Governador Provincial

Menongue

Kuando-Kubango

República de Angola

Email: Salutation: Sua Excelência/ Excellency

Posts can also be made on the website:

<http://www.kuandokubango.gov.ao/CentroContactos.aspx>

Menongue city Administrator

Antunes Fernando Huambo

Administrador do Menongue

Menongue

Kuando-Kubango

República de Angola

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In January 2013 the Kuando Kubango Provincial Governor announced on a local radio station that Aeroporto Comandante Kwenha neighbourhood along with the neighbourhoods of Feira, Azul, Caemaneiro, Bom dia, Futungo, Aerovia, Paz and Novo would undergo 'urban restructuring'. It is believed the 9 April demolitions were part of this 'urban restructuring' program. Amnesty International is concerned that, in the absence of appropriate legal safeguards as required by international human rights law and standards, thousands of families are at risk of being forcibly evicted.

A forced eviction is the removal of people against their will, from the homes or land they occupy, without appropriate legal protections and other safeguards including adequate notice, opportunities for genuine consultation and access to legal remedies.

International human rights law, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Charter), to which Angola is a State Party, prohibits Angola from carrying out forced evictions, and obliges it to protect people from forced evictions carried out by third parties. Evictions may only be carried out as a last resort, once all other feasible alternatives to eviction have been explored in genuine consultation with affected communities. Evictions should not take place in particularly bad weather or at night unless the affected persons consent otherwise. No one should be made homeless or vulnerable to other human rights violations as a result of the evictions. Adequate alternative housing and compensation for all losses must be made available to those affected prior to eviction. These requirements apply to all settlements, regardless of their tenure status, including informal settlements.

Angolan authorities have failed to put in place appropriate legal protections and other safeguards, such as genuine consultation with communities to identify alternatives to evictions and resettlement options; adequate and reasonable prior notice and full information on the proposed evictions or access to effective legal remedies in the case of Aeroporto Comandante Kwenha neighbourhood in Menongue. They have failed to provide adequate alternative accommodation to those who cannot provide for themselves and compensation, all of which is required under international law.

Name: Families in 40 houses in Menongue

Gender m/f: both

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