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Angola: Ratification of treaties must be followed by action to respect human rights

Amnesty International welcomes the ratification by the Angolan authorities on 2 October 2019 of four major human rights treaties as a positive step that must now be followed by effective action to improve respect for human rights in the country, Amnesty International said today.

The treaties ratified are: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; and Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

By ratifying these human rights treaties, the Angolan authorities under president João Lourenço, are sending a message that they want to move towards full and effective respect for the human rights of everyone.

According to the Angolan Constitution, once the Government ratifies an international human rights instrument, that instrument becomes part of the national legislation.

The Angolan authorities are legally obliged to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the range of rights guaranteed by these treaties, which are now part of the national legislation for everybody, without discrimination.

Background

Since the election of President João Lourenço in 2017, the Angolan authorities have made efforts to improve their human rights record tainted by nearly four decades of former President José Eduardo dos Santos' administration. Dos Santos' rule was marred by suppression of dissent, with anyone daring to challenge his government victimised, including jailed or disappeared. In July 2017, Angolan Constitutional Tribunal declared unconstitutional and abolished the Non-Governmental Organization

Presidential Decree that restricted the registration and financial support of NGOs.

On 23 January 2019, Angolan Parliament adopted a progressive new penal code, which decriminalized consensual same sex relations.