

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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## **Amnesty International calls on Angola to repeal criminal defamation laws and allow peaceful demonstrations to take place**

### ***Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Angola***

Amnesty International welcomes the support by Angola of the majority of the recommendations made during its review in the UPR Working Group, and calls on the government to implement these without delay. However, the organization is disappointed that Angola has rejected 34 recommendations, including some calling on the government to refrain from using criminal defamation laws to restrict the right to freedom of expression.

Amnesty International is concerned that although by law demonstrations do not require authorization, the authorities often refuse to allow them to take place. During demonstrations police have arbitrarily arrested and detained peaceful demonstrators. On 14 March, two human rights defenders were arrested after notifying the government of their intent to protest peacefully in the province of Cabinda.

Amnesty International urges the government to respect domestic law and allow peaceful demonstrations to take place and refrain from using excessive force against peaceful demonstrators.

Suppression of freedom of expression, including of the press, is a key factor in the ongoing cycle of human rights violations in Angola. Its rejection of recommendations to repeal criminal defamation laws is particularly alarming.<sup>1</sup>

The authorities continue to use criminal defamation laws to arbitrarily arrest and detain individuals for peacefully expressing their views. The authorities use the same laws to place restrictions on press freedom and journalists face harassment and arbitrary detention while covering new stories.

Amnesty International urges the government to repeal the criminal defamation laws, in particular provisions that impose punishment for alleged defamation of the head of state or other public officials.

### **Background**

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Angola on 19 March 2015 during its 28<sup>th</sup> session. Prior to the adoption of the review outcome, Amnesty International delivered the oral statement above. Amnesty International had earlier submitted information on the situation of human rights in Angola:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr12/005/2014/en/>

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/28/11, paragraphs 135.30 (Estonia), 135.31 (United States of America), 135.32 (Sweden), 135.33 (Norway), 135.34 (Australia).

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