

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 12/005/2005

2 December 2005

UA 303/05

Forced evictions/use of excessive force

ANGOLA

About 300 families
Lúis Araújo (m), human rights defender
11 others including members of SOS-Habitat (housing rights NGO)

About 300 families were forcibly evicted from their homes, without consultation or any opportunity to challenge the evictions, in two neighbourhoods of the capital, Luanda, on 24 and 30 November. Their homes were demolished and they have been left without any shelter during the rainy season. The Luanda Provincial Government reportedly said that the houses had been randomly and illegally built on land designated by the provincial government for private housing and other development projects.

On 24 November, officers from the 5th Police Division armed with machine guns came with Luanda Provincial Government officials to Cambamba I and II neighbourhoods at 7am and, after shouting at people to get out and beating some of them, started to demolish the houses.

The residents attempted to impede the demolitions: all were peaceful at first, but later some threw stones at the police. At 9.30am members of a local NGO, SOS-Habitat, which campaigns for the right to adequate housing and against forced evictions, arrived and joined members of the area residents' committee to try to stop the evictions and demolitions. The police beat and arrested 12 people, including SOS-Habitat coordinator Lúis Araújo, for "incitement to violence". The police took them to the 32nd *Squadron* (police station) where they were kept overnight in appalling conditions, sharing a cell measuring 4m by 4m with 10 others. They were taken to court the next day and then released without charge for lack of evidence. Their case was referred to the criminal investigation police for further investigation. They are all at risk of being arrested again, and ill-treated or tortured.

On 30 November, 70 heavily armed officers from the 5th Police Division, together with military police, soldiers, members of a private security company and of a commercial firm's demolition team came to the Cambamba neighbourhoods to continue with the forced evictions and house demolitions. One family are reported to have barricaded themselves inside their home, refusing to leave.

Forced evictions in Cambamba I and II began in September 2005, when armed police demolished most of the homes in the area without notice, ordering all inhabitants to move out of the area. However, many refused to leave and put up basic zinc shelters where their homes had stood. These structures were destroyed by the police in the latest wave of evictions.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Thousands of families in Luanda live in informal settlements without legal title to the land they occupy. Many of them came to Luanda after they were forced to flee their homes during the 27-year civil war, which ended in 2002. Since the war ended, demand for land in Luanda for public and private developments, including high- and middle-income housing, has increased. To facilitate such developments, the authorities have forcibly evicted thousands of poor families from their homes.

Under international law forced evictions, that is evictions carried out without consultations, due process of law and assurances of adequate alternative accommodation, are a grave violations of human rights.

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

- expressing concern that about 300 families were forcibly evicted from their homes in Cambamba I and II neighbourhoods in Luanda on 24 and 30 November, and asking the authorities to ensure that they are provided with adequate alternative accommodation;
- expressing concern at reports that the police used excessive force during the evictions, and calling for a full, effective and independent inquiry, with those responsible brought to justice, and the findings of the inquiry made public;
- expressing concern that Luís Araújo and 11 other human rights activists and residents were arrested during the 24 November evictions, and allegedly beaten;
- urging the National Police Commander not to deploy police officers to assist in forced evictions.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Interior

Sua Excelência Osvaldo de Jesus Serra Van-Dúnem, Ministro do Interior, Ministério do Interior, Avenida 4 Fevereiro No. 106, Luanda, República de Angola

Fax: +244 222 39 25 52; +244 222 39 51 53; +244 222 39 13 26

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 Capaphina

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; +244 222 333 172

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 13 January 2006.