

UA 189/07

Arbitrary arrest/torture

ANGOLA

Pedro Maria António (m)
Paulo Mazungo (m)
André Conde (m)
Domingos Conde (m)

The four men named above were arbitrarily arrested on 14 July by Provincial Criminal Investigative Police officers in the province of Cabinda. They had been protesting against the appointment of a new bishop, and Amnesty International believes that they have been arrested solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression. They have reportedly been tortured.

They were arrested for carrying placards expressing their discontent at the appointment of Dom Filomeno Vieira Dias as the Bishop for Cabinda, during a special Catholic mass celebrating the visit of a Cardinal sent by the Vatican. They are being held at the headquarters of the Provincial Criminal Investigative Police in the city of Cabinda and have been charged with "injury against a public authority" and "inciting violence against a religious authority". They are to appear before the Cabinda Provincial Criminal Court for a summary judgement on 23 July.

The four are among many who are unhappy at the appointment of a Bishop for Cabinda who is not from the province. They were holding placards with the slogans, "The Church of Cabinda is divided", "The voice of the people is the voice of God" and "Dom Filomeno does not represent heaven for the believers". A fifth man arrested with them was apparently released the same day.

The four were taken to the headquarters of the Provincial Criminal Investigative Police. They were taken before the Procurator General to be charged on 17 July: under Angolan law, this should have taken place within 48 hours. They have reportedly developed a fever, but have not been allowed to see a doctor and have only received medication brought by their families.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Cabinda is a sliver of land between the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Congo Republic. The region is internationally recognized as part of Angola and produces most of the country's oil export. However, an armed conflict for secession led by the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (*Frente para a Libertação de Enclave de Cabinda*, FLEC) has been underway in the territory since Angola's independence in 1975. In 2004, FLEC, the Church, and civil society organisations set up the Cabinda Forum for Dialogue (FCD) to enter into dialogue with the government for peace in Cabinda. On 1 August 2006 the government and the FCD signed a Memorandum of Understanding for Peace and Reconciliation in Cabinda. This memorandum was rejected by FLEC and other members of civil society who claim it was signed by a former FCD president who had been expelled from the organisation in April 2006 and that he did not represent their views.

Bishop Filomeno Vieira Dias was nominated to take over as Bishop for the Cabinda Province diocese in February 2005 by Pope John Paul II, and sworn in June 2006. His nomination has been marred by controversy with some members of the Church expressing discontent at having a Bishop who is not from Cabinda. Amnesty International takes no position on the appointment of Bishop Filomeno Vieira Dias, but no one should be detained merely for exercising their right to freedom of expression.

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

- expressing concern that Pedro Maria António, Paulo Mazungo, André Conde and Domingos Conde were arrested on 14 July, and appear to be a prisoners of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful expression of their opinions;
- expressing concern at reports that the four have been tortured, and seeking assurances that this will be stopped immediately;
- expressing concern that they were held without charge for well over the 48 hours allowed by law;
- expressing concern that they have all reportedly developed a fever but have not been allowed to see a doctor, and urging the authorities to allow them any medical attention they may require.

APPEALS TO:

Provincial Procurator General of Cabinda

Exmo. Sr. Pascoal Joaquim

Fax: +244 231 222415

Salutation: Excelência

Procurator General of the Republic

Exmo. Sr. 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

Minister of the Interior

Sua Excelência General Roberto Leal Monteiro

Ministro do Interior

Ministério do Interior

Avenida 4 Fevereiro No. 106

Luanda, República de Angola

Fax: +244 222 395133

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

+244 222 338 175

Salutation: Excelência

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 29 September 2007.
