

URGENT ACTION

17 ANGOLAN YOUTH ACTIVISTS GRANTED AMNESTY

The 17 Angolan youth activists arrested, detained and convicted for attending a meeting to discuss politics and governance concerns in the country were granted amnesty by the Supreme Court on 16 September. Instead of the amnesty, 16 of them would prefer to have their conviction quashed.

The Angolan National Assembly on 20 July approved an Amnesty Law that granted amnesty to detainees, including the **Angola17 activists**, who committed specific crimes up to 11 November 2015. The Amnesty law came into force on 12 August. The Supreme Court made the decision to apply the amnesty to the Angola17 activists on 16 September, but their lawyers were only notified a month later.

Following the Supreme Court's decision, the Angola17 activists, except for Domingos da Cruz, signed a petition rejecting the amnesty. This is because with the Supreme Court decision, the appeal they had lodged against their conviction was nullified, but the activists would prefer to have their conviction quashed which would serve as a recognition of their innocence. The petition was given to their lawyers to be used as part of an appeal they intend to lodge against the Supreme Court decision.

Amnesty International considered the 17 Angolan activists to be prisoners of conscience, imprisoned and convicted solely for the peaceful exercise of their rights.

The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (UNWGAD) on 31 May released an Opinion on the case in which it considered "the detention and deprivation of liberty of the activists arbitrary" and requested the Government of Angola to "immediately release them and accord them an enforceable right to compensation and, at the same time, to put an end to the unlawful criminal proceedings against them". Amnesty International submitted the case to the UNWGAD on 12 October 2015.

The activists had been out of jail since June 2016, when the Supreme Court analysed the habeas corpus lodged by their lawyers and ordered their conditional release pending a final decision on their case.

After his release, Nito Alves, one of the members of the group, shared his gratitude with Amnesty International's Lusophone team: "I will keep the fight for human rights, for a fair Angola, a fair Africa and for a fair world. I am grateful for the help of those who fought for our freedom, including civil society actors, lawyers, Amnesty International, press and media."

No further action is requested of the UA network. Many thanks to those who sent appeals.

This is the eight update of UA 143/15. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr12/4412/2016/en/>

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