

URGENT ACTION

FOUR YOUTH ACTIVISTS DETAINED WITHOUT CHARGE

Four Angolan youth activists who are part of the Benguela Revolutionary Movement (Movimento Revolucionário de Benguela) were arrested by police on the evening of 4 August. They are being detained at the Comarca do Lobito prison.

Four Angolan youth activists were on 4 August arrested without a warrant. **Avisto Botha** - the Secretary General of the Benguela Revolutionary Movement - was arrested at home. His neighbour, **Valeriano Kussuma**, was arrested while washing his motorcycle. **Euclides Lucas** and **Amaro Justino Quintas** were arrested while playing basketball at a school in their neighbourhood. Police officers in two police cars fired shots into the air as they approached the school. All four were taken to the 4th Police Unit (4^a Esquadra) where they spent the night before being transferred to the Criminal Investigation Service of Lobito (Serviço de Investigação Criminal do Lobito) on the morning of 5 August. They were transferred again on 8 August to Comarca do Lobito prison. The four have not been charged yet. However, they were informed by the Public Prosecutor that their detention is because they are suspected of aggravated robbery, drug trafficking and violence against supporters of the ruling party Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA). A claim they deny. Bail has been set at 65,000 kwanzas for Avisto Botha and 48,000 kwanzas for the other activists. The Benguela Revolutionary Movement is trying to find ways to raise this money.

This is not the first time the four youth activists have been arrested. They were to take part in a peaceful demonstration organized by the Benguela Revolutionary Movement to demand for effective measures against inflation in Angola on 23 July. At around 12PM, as they were on their way to the demonstration, Valeriano Kussuma, Euclides Lucas and Amaro Justino Quintas, alongside 19 other activists and a driver, were stopped by police officers, arrested and taken into detention at the Municipal Police Command of Benguela. Three hours later, Avisto Botha and 12 other activists were arrested before the peaceful demonstration could start and also taken to the Municipal Police Command of Benguela. All the activists and the driver were released at 7PM on 23 July without being charged.

Please write immediately in Portuguese, English or your own language:

- Calling on the Angolan authorities to release the four activists immediately, unless they are promptly charged with a recognizable offence, in line with international law and standards;
- Calling on them to ensure that, pending their release, the four are not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment;
- Urging them to end the practice of arbitrary arrests, harassment and intimidation of activists, and uphold the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 SEPTEMBER 2016 TO:

Provincial Commander of the National

Police - Benguela

Pimão Tonias Queta

Provincial Police Command

CP 163

Benguela, Republic of Angola

Email: [sqeta@gmail.com](mailto:squeta@gmail.com)

Salutation: Dear Sir

Provincial Governor - Benguela

Isaac dos Anjos

Office of the Provincial Governor

Rua Comandante Kassanje

CP 2

Edifício do Governo Provincial, 1º Andar

Benguela, Republic of Angola

Fax: +244 272 235 003

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice and Human Rights

Rui Jorge Carneiro Mangueira

Ministry of Justice and Human Rights

Rua 17 Setembro, No. 32

CP 1986

Email: rui.mangueira@minjus.gov.ao

Fax: +244 222 330 327

Luanda, Republic of Angola

Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR MIGUEL GASPAR FERNANDES NETO, Embassy of the Republic of Angola, 22 Dorset Street W1U 6QY, 020 7299 9850, Fax 020 7486 9397 Email embassy@angola.org.uk, press@angola.org.uk salutation: Your Excellency

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Dissent is frequently dealt with repressively, and often violently, by the Angolan authorities. Amnesty International has documented how the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly have been unlawfully restricted in Angola in its report Punishing Dissent: Suppression of Freedom of Association and Assembly in Angola (Index AFR 12/004/2014).

Some of those who have challenged the government of President José Eduardo dos Santos have been subjected to unlawful killings, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture. Despite freedom of expression and peaceful assembly being clearly enshrined in the country's constitution and in several international treaties that Angola has signed and ratified, violations of these rights continue to occur.

Other members of the Benguela Revolutionary Movement that were involved in the peaceful demonstration planned for 23 July have also been facing harassment and intimidation from government authorities. A man who identified himself as a member of the military took pictures of the house of the activist Livulo Prata on 4 August. Police officers went to the house of the activist Ricardo Francisco Pedro Pataca on 5 August. Even though he was not at home, the police officers broke his bedroom door and searched the room without any warrant.

A peaceful demonstration to demand for effective measures against inflation in Angola was scheduled to take place on 23 July. On that day, around 12PM, the driver of the Angolan NGO, Organização Humanitária Internacional (OHI), was driving youth activists to the demonstration when he was stopped by police officers. The driver and 22 youth activists who were in the vehicle were then taken to the Municipal Police Command of Benguela where they were detained. The vehicle, its keys and documents belonging to the driver were confiscated. Three hours later, 13 more activists were arrested where the peaceful demonstration was supposed to start and taken to the same police station. Around 7PM, all the detained activists and OHI's driver were released. The seized objects and documents, except for the vehicle, were returned to the activists and the driver on 26 July. Having been notified of the peaceful demonstration in advance by the youth activists, and prior to it taking place, the Provincial Government of Benguela refused to authorize the demonstration without any justification, in violation of the right to peaceful assembly. More information about these events can be found here: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr12/4590/2016/en/>