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SOS-Torture Network
The Observatory
for the Protection
of Human Rights Defenders



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

ANGOLA: Detained pro-democracy activists should be released

Geneva-Paris, October 16, 2015 – After almost four months of arbitrary detention of pro-democracy human rights defenders and following the detention of 20 individuals who were participating in a vigil to demand their release, the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (a joint FIDH-OMCT programme), AJPD and OSISA-Angola call for their immediate and unconditional release after filing a communication to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

Thirteen pro-democracy activists namely, Messrs. Henrique Luaty Beirão (a.k.a. Brigadeiro Mata-Frakuxz), Manuel Nito Alves, Nuno Alvaro Dala, Nelson Dibango Mendes Dos Santos, Alfonso Jojo Matias (a.k.a. Mbanza Hamza), Sedrick de Carvalho, Fernando António Tomás (a.k.a. Nicola Radical), Hitler Chiconda (a.k.a. Samussuku), Italiano Arante Kivuvu, Benedito Dali (a.k.a. Dito Dali), Albano Bingobingo (a.k.a. Albano Liberdade), José Gomes Hata (a.k.a. Cheik Hata) and Inocêncio De Brito (a.k.a. Druux), were arrested by heavily armed police on June 20, 2015, while participating in a book club meeting to discuss human rights violations, democracy and governance concerns in Angola, through a reflection on the book by Gene Sharp entitled “From Dictatorship to Democracy”. The next day, journalist and human rights activist Mr. **Domingos da Cruz** was also arrested. Mr. da Cruz was initially supposed to take part in the meeting as a speaker, but he finally did not attend the meeting. On June 24, Mr. Osvaldo Caholo, a reserve military personnel and university professor acquainted to one of the fourteen, was also arrested after the police found photos of him during a police search conducted. A total of 15 individuals have been unlawfully detained on trumped up charges of plotting against the Government for nearly four months .

“We reiterate our strong condemnation of the ongoing arbitrary detention of pro-democracy activists on trumped up rebellion and plotting charges, which was staged by the authorities to punish them for peaceful human rights activities and in violation of the rights recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”, FIDH President Karim Lahidji said.

Mr. Henrique Luaty Beirão has been on a hunger strike for 26 days to protest his arbitrary detention. It is reported that his physical condition has seriously deteriorated. He was again hospitalised on October 9. Other two activists Albano Bingobingo and Nelson Dibango Mendes Dos Santos have also been on hunger strike for 12 and five days respectively.

“The situation for human rights defenders in Angola is deteriorating in a very worrying way and the international community must be firm in defending their right to carry out their activities without any hurdles. That is why we have filed a complaint to the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and we are confident that this mechanism will confirm the arbitrariness of these detentions and request their immediate and unconditional release”, OMCT Secretary General Gerald Staberock said.

On October 12, 2015, 20 individuals were arrested for participating in a vigil to demand the release of the detained human rights defenders.

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (OBS) was created in 1997 by FIDH and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT). The objective of this

rights defenders.

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