



11 November 2015

Via email

Dear President Jacob Zuma,

Re: Request to urge the Angolan government to release human rights defenders

We the undersigned representing 32 civil society organisations working on youth issues write to you to seek your urgent intervention regarding unacceptable restrictions on the freedoms of expression, assembly and association and gross violations of the rights of human rights defenders in Angola. We are writing to bring your attention to the plight of young activists in detention for engaging in human rights and pro-democracy activities and to request that you call on the Angolan authorities to release them when they appear in court on 16-20 November 2015.

On 20 June 2015, 15 youth activists were arrested at a private residence, where they had a meeting to discuss issues of democracy by reflecting on the book, *From Dictatorship to Democracy: a conceptual framework for Liberation* by Gene Sharp. The arrested activists include; **Henrique Luati da Silva Beirão, Albano Bingobingo Manuel Nito Alves, Nuno Alvaro Dala, Nelson Mendes Dos Santos, Alfonso Jojo Matias (Mbanza Hamza), Sedrick de Carvalho, Fernando António Tomás (Nicola Radical), Hitler Chiconda (Samussuku), Italiano Arante Kivuvu, Benedito Dali (Dito Dali), José Gomes Hata (a.k.a. Cheik Hata) and Inocénio De Brito (Drux) as well as Domingos da Cruz, journalist, and Osvaldo Correia Caholo, a reserve military officer.**

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Following their arrest they were each taken to their homes in handcuffs by security officers. Their homes were ransacked and electronic material, computers, photographs, diaries, magazines, documents, credit cards were seized. Other items belonging to family members were also confiscated. The operation took place without any arrest warrant and the security forces and the police were heavily armed and in several instances they broke doors to gain access.

We bring to your attention, the fact that most of the activists have been victims of repression from the authorities who have violently suppressed any attempts to hold peaceful protests. While in prison some of the activists have been tortured. Two of the activists Henrique Luati da Silva Beirão and Albano Bingobingo were on hunger strike at different periods to protest against prison conditions and ill-treatment of those detained.

These activists are part of a youth movement frustrated by the severe restrictions on civic freedoms in Angola and absence of democratic reforms.

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They advocate for democratic change and respect for the fundamental rights of Angolans. The movement calls for political reforms and an improvement in social and economic justice issues in Angola. The group uses online tools to monitor and report on the demonstrations in Angola and members of the group reach out to victims of police brutality and those arbitrarily detained.

We appreciate your prompt consideration of our plea and request you call on President José Eduardo dos Santos to:

- i) Immediately release all 15 activists when they appear in court as they are being detained on spurious charges.
- ii) Respect the fundamental rights of all Angolans including the right to freely assembly, associate with others and express their views.
- iii) Conduct independent investigations into the violations of the rights of these 15 activists while in detention and hold the perpetrators of these violations accountable.
- iv) Stop intimidating human rights defenders and create an enabling environment for civil society.

Signed

African Youth Movement, Tunisia

African Culture, Burkina Faso

Asociación SERES, Guatemala

Action For Fundamental Change And Development - [AFFCAD](#), Uganda

Association Trait d'Union des Jeunes Burkinabé (ATUJB), Burkina Faso

Association Jeunesse et Défi (AJD), Burkina Faso

Association des Jeunes Femmes Entreprenantes du Burkina (AJFEB), Burkina Faso

Association Trait d'Union des Jeunes Burkinabé (ATUJB), Burkina Faso

Association Jeunesse et Défi (AJD), Burkina Faso

Association des Jeunes Femmes Entreprenantes du Burkina (AJFEB), Burkina Faso

Association la Joie de Vivre pour Tous (AJVIT), Burkina Faso

Association Liaison Universelle (ALU), Burkina Faso

Association Nouage Jeunesse Equilibre et Santé (ANJES), Burkina Faso

Association Bon Cœur pour l'Enfance (ABCE), Burkina Faso



Association des jeunes pour la promotion des orphelins (AJPO), Burkina Faso

Action santé et développement au Burkina Faso (ASD/BF)

Coexistence with Alternative Language and Action Movement (CALAM), Tunisia

Development Perspectives, Ireland

Earthrise Trust, South Africa

Federation of Young European Greens (FYEG), Europe

Filimbi, Democratic Republic of Congo

Jeunesse Active du Burkina (JAB), Burkina Faso

Jeunesse Emploi et développement (JED), Burkina Faso

Lucha, Democratic Republic of Congo

Niger Delta Women's movement for Peace and Development, Nigeria

Oeil, Oreille et la Bouche du citoyen (B2O), Burkina Faso

Pauline Wanja CIVICUS Member, Kenya

Réseau des Organisations des Jeunes Leaders des Nations Unies pour les OMD section Burkina Faso (ROJALNU-OMD/BF), Burkina Faso

Uganda Civil Society Incubator (UCSI), Uganda

West African Youth Network, Sierra Leone/Liberia/Burkina Faso

Young Diplomats of Canada, Canada

Y en a Marre, Senegal



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