

Brussels, 19 NOV. 2013
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Ms Ana Maria Gomes
European Parliament
Rue Wiertz 60
1047 Brussels

Dear Ana,

I would like to thank you for your letter of 17 October 2013 addressed to President Jose Manuel Barroso and to me in which you draw our attention to the personal case of Nito Alves who is in prison in Luanda. President Barroso has asked me to answer on his behalf.

I am aware of the detention of Manuel Chivade Baptiste Nito Alves in Luanda and my services are following his case closely. I have been informed that the initial charges filed against him, "defamation" as part of the Law on Crimes against State Security, have now been changed to the lesser charge of "encouraging public disorder".

The EU Delegation in Luanda has been in contact with Nito Alves's family, his lawyer and with the Association Mãos Livres. The lawyer has confirmed that the conditions of Nito Alves's arrest are very bad. As a 17 year old boy, he is not separated from other prisoners and highly violent offenders. A provisional release has not been accepted. We continue to monitor the progress of his personal situation.

As you most probably know, the T-Shirts produced by Nito Alvez had the following sentence printed on the back: "Povo angolano, quando a Guerra é necessária e urgente" (Angolan people, the war is necessary and urgent). This slogan is of course quite sensitive in a country that had such a long history of civil war.

We share the public concerns expressed by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Navi Pillay, during her visit to Angola at the end of April 2013. There are still problems with regard to the content, interpretation and implementation of laws on the freedom of expression and freedom of assembly in Angola, and they should not be compromised by threats, intimidation or actions on the part of authorities.

The politics of human rights in Angola was examined under the United Nations Universal Periodic Review which provided specific recommendations to ensure the freedom of expression and the fight against arbitrary detention and harassment. Most of these recommendations were accepted by Angola. This is a positive step ahead on the part of authorities and the actual implementation will be reviewed in 2014, under the same framework.

Thank you for your initiative and your cooperation in the defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the world.

Sincerely,



Catherine Ashton