

DEPUTADA AO PARLAMENTO EUROPEU

Brussels, 1 February 2010

Subject: Human Rights in Cabinda

Dear President Barroso,
and Dear High Representative, Lady Ashton

We would like to call your attention to the situation in Cabinda, Angola.

In the last few weeks, various activists and renowned international NGOs have reported a crackdown on members of the civil society, with at least eight people detained, in the aftermath of the 8th of January attack on the Togolese national football team.

Among those arrested are Francisco Luemba, a prominent lawyer and former member of the banned human rights organization Mpalabanda; Raul Tati, a catholic priest, and Belchior Lanso Tati, an economist and university professor. They have been outspoken about the political tensions in Cabinda. The three were accused of having committed "crimes against the security of the state" but were arrested without being formally charged with any specific accusation.

Also, Fernando Lelo, a former VOA journalist in Cabinda, was threatened of being re-arrested.

In a meeting at the European Parliament on the 26th of January, Father Jorge Congo, reported on the recent arrests and the denial of basic human rights and freedoms in Cabinda. He also reported on his endeavours to establish a political dialogue to solve the challenges in Cabinda, a dialogue which has been systematically refused by the authorities in Luanda. He is to return to Cabinda by the 1st of February, despite rumours that he, himself, may also be arrested.

We urge you to call on the government of Angola to immediately halt arbitrary arrests against peaceful political and civic activists and, instead, to endeavour to bring to justice the authors of the attack against the Togolese football team.

We would also urge you to instruct the EU Delegation in Luanda to closely monitor the situation of human rights defenders and journalists under threat, such as Father Congo and Mr. Lelo.

Best regards,



Ana Gomes
Member of the European Parliament
Member of the 2008 EP EOM to Angola



Richard Howitt
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