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Federica Mogherini

High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President
of the European Commission

Brussels, 06 March 2018

Dear Federica,

I am writing to urge you to instruct the EU Delegation in Luanda, Angola, to observe the judicial trial against Angolan journalist and human rights defender Rafael Marques de Morais.

Mr. Morais had been notified to appear before the Provincial Tribunal in Luanda yesterday, 5th of March, but the beginning of the trial was postponed *sine die*.

In May 2017 Mr. Morais was charged with "outrage to a sovereign body", which in Angola is considered a crime against state security, and "insult against a public authority". They relate to concerns Mr. Morais raised in a 2016 article he wrote in *Maka Angola*, regarding a 2011 real estate transaction involving the former Attorney General of Angola, João Maria Moreira de Sousa, for purposes of urban development whereas the property, located in a prime location, was designated as "rural land", thus sold for a paltry sum.

The continuation of the case against Mr. Morais is all the more disappointing as it follows President Lourenço's pledge to fight corruption and extend press freedom.

Mr. Morais runs *Maka Angola*, an anti-corruption and pro-democracy website publishing investigative journalism of the highest standard and faced numerous criminal and civil proceedings has over the years in response to his work. He has been burdened with heavy legal costs and has been deprived of his liberty on several occasions.

Despite that, Mr. Morais has continued his efforts to document human rights violations in Angola whilst advocating for transparency and accountability by the Angolan government.

The ABA Center for Human Rights has announced it will be closely monitoring the proceedings against Mr. Morais. The presence of EU representatives will, no doubt, strengthen the stance of the international community in ensuring that he receives a fair trial.

Best regards
Ana Gomes

Ana Gomes
Member of the European Parliament