

Angola

	2014	2015		
Internet Freedom Status	Partly Free	Partly Free	Population:	22.4 million
Obstacles to Access (0-25)	15	14	Internet Penetration 2014:	21 percent
Limits on Content (0-35)	7	8	Social Media/ICT Apps Blocked:	No
Violations of User Rights (0-40)	16	17	Political/Social Content Blocked:	No
TOTAL* (0-100)	38	39	Bloggers/ICT Users Arrested:	Yes
			Press Freedom 2015 Status:	Not Free

* 0=most free, 100=least free

Key Developments: June 2014 – May 2015

- In May 2015, defamation charges against investigative journalist and blogger Rafael Marques de Morais culminated in a guilty verdict, which carried a six-month suspended prison sentence and an order to remove all copies and references of the offending material from the country and the internet (see **Content Removal** and **Prosecutions and Detentions for Online Activities**).
- Throughout 2014, members of a Facebook group called Central Angola 7311 organized via text message a series of flash mob demonstrations at government ministries to protest restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly (see **Digital Activism**).
- The authorities increasingly targeted critical comments posted on social media platforms, arresting one user for a Facebook post in April 2015 (see **Prosecutions and Detentions for Online Activities**).
- In June 2015, leaked emails from the surveillance company Hacking Team revealed efforts by Angola's intelligence agency to acquire Hacking Team's notorious Remote Control System (RCS) sometime in 2013 (see **Surveillance, Privacy, and Anonymity**).
- The critical news blog *Maka Angola* was attacked and taken down for several days at a time in the lead-up to the criminal defamation case against the outlet's owner, Rafael Marques de Morais (see **Technical Violence**).

Introduction

Angola boasts one of the largest mobile telecommunications markets in sub-Saharan Africa as a result of heavy government investments to improve access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) since 2005, leading to a steady increase in internet access via mobile devices, mainly in urban areas. Nonetheless, extreme income inequality, high costs, and poor infrastructure outside of major cities are major obstacles to ICT access for poorer Angolans who mostly live in rural areas.

Despite progress in ICT development, the telecom sector is effectively under state control, with high ranking government officials owning large shares of the major telecommunications service providers. Further, the president has legal powers to control and punish internet service providers (ISPs) for unspecified offenses under the 2011 Law on Electronic Communications and Information Company Services.

Political rights and civil liberties are tightly restricted by the ruling party under President José Eduardo dos Santos, who has been in power for over 35 years. While the government did not block access to online content or communication applications during the coverage period, the government seemed increasingly intent on cracking down against online dissent through legal and extralegal means. In April 2015, one Facebook user was arrested for a post that had recounted the user's abuse at the hands of a military general. He was held in a military prison without charges and released a week later only after he agreed to take down the offending post. In May 2015, ongoing defamation charges against investigative journalist and blogger Rafael Marques de Morais culminated in a guilty conviction, which carried a six-month suspended prison sentence and an impossible order to remove all copies and references of the investigative expose on the internet. In the lead-up to his court case, de Morais's critical news blog *Maka Angola* was attacked and taken down for several days at a time.

Meanwhile, surveillance of online communications remained a concern, particularly following leaked emails from the surveillance company Hacking Team, which revealed efforts by Angola's intelligence agency to acquire Hacking Team's notorious Remote Control System (RCS) sometime in 2013.

Obstacles to Access

Internet and mobile phone penetration increased incrementally from 2013 to 2014, hindered largely by high costs and poor infrastructure that limit access primarily in urban areas. Senior government officials have direct and indirect shareholder participation in many Angolan ICT companies, providing the government with some level of control over the sector, while the 2011 Law on Electronic Communications empowers the president to control the ICT sector at will.

Availability and Ease of Access

Access to ICTs in Angola has improved markedly with increasing investments in the telecommunications sector since the end of the country's decades-long civil war in 2002. In 2014, internet use in Angola reached a penetration rate of 21 percent, up from 19 percent in 2013, according to the latest available data from the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).¹ Access to mobile phones

1 International Telecommunication Union, "Percentage of Individuals Using the Internet, 2000-2014," <http://bit.ly/1cblxxY>.

Angola

is much higher with a penetration rate of over 63 percent in 2014, slightly up from 62 percent in 2013,² and over 12 percent of Angolans have mobile broadband subscriptions. Meanwhile, fixed-line broadband subscriptions remain very low with a penetration rate of only 0.4 percent in 2014 and are largely concentrated in the capital city, Luanda, due to the country's high poverty rate and poor infrastructure in rural areas.³

High costs are the main hindrance to increasing ICT access for the majority of Angolans whose median annual per capita income was US\$720.⁴ For those able to access the internet in urban areas, subscriptions start at US\$50 per month but can cost as high as US\$100 per month for connections via satellite or WiMax. Unlimited internet subscriptions cost an average of US\$150 per month, while USB dongle devices that provide wireless access cost between US\$50 and \$60. Consequently, less than 8 percent of Angolan households have internet access at home.⁵ Mobile internet packages come at a monthly cost of about US\$45, while internet cafes charge approximately US\$1 for 30 minutes. Due to these high prices, most internet users in Luanda go online at their workplaces.

In rural areas, voice and data services can be twice as expensive and of much poorer quality, subject to frequent cuts and extremely slow connection speeds as a result of poor infrastructure. According to the latest data from Akamai's "State of the Internet" report, average broadband connection speed in Angola is 2.0 Mbps (compared to a global average of 3.9 Mbps).⁶ ICT access is further hindered by the country's fractured electricity system that serves less than 40 percent of the population, mostly in urban areas.⁷

Restrictions on Connectivity

There were no restrictions on connectivity to internet or mobile phone networks reported during the coverage period.

Angola's domestic backbone is currently comprised of microwave, VSAT, and fiber-optic cables. Connection to the international internet goes through the West Africa Cable System (WACS) and South Atlantic 3 (SAT-3) cable, the latter of which is operated by the state-owned Angola Telecom, which may enable the government to partially control internet connectivity if desired.⁸

In 2014, Angola began construction on the South Atlantic Cable System (SACS), a submarine fiber-optic cable connecting Brazil and Angola that aims to reduce the bandwidth costs associated with the distance that internet traffic currently has to travel from Europe and the United States.⁹ Construction of SACS is expected to be completed by late 2016.

2 International Telecommunication Union, "Mobile-Cellular Telephone Subscriptions, 2000-2014," <http://bit.ly/1cblxxY>.

3 International Telecommunication Union, "Fixed (Wired)-Broadband Subscriptions, 2000-2014," <http://bit.ly/1cblxxY>.

4 Glenn Phelps and Steve Crabtree, "Worldwide, Median Household Income About \$10,000," Gallup World, December 16, 2013, <http://bit.ly/1j9SsIK>.

5 International Telecommunication Union, "Angola Profile (latest data available: 2013)," *ICT-Eye*, accessed August 1, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1NEhLHK>.

6 Akamai, "Average Connection Speed," Map Visualization, *State of the Internet, Q4 2014* (2015), accessed May 29, 2015, <http://akamai.me/1LiS6KD>.

7 World Bank, "Access to electricity (% of population)," accessed July 31, 2014, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.ELC.ACCS.ZS>.

8 "Sistema de Cabos da África Ocidental entra na fase final," [Cable system in Western Africa in final phase] *Portalangop*, October 27, 2012, <http://bit.ly/1ZdV7BZ>.

9 NEC, "Angola cables to build the world's first submarine cable across the South Atlantic," press release, November 4, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1MfbXqw>.

ICT Market

Senior government officials have direct and indirect shareholder participation in many Angolan companies, including ISPs and mobile phone providers, providing the government with some level of control over the ICT sector. For one, the state oil company, Sonangol, owns 3 of the country's 18 ISPs (MSTelcom, Nexus, and ACS) and is a major shareholder in 2 other companies—UNITEL and Angola Cables, the former of which is the country's largest ISP.¹⁰ The national telecom company, Angola Telecom, an ISP itself, is also a major shareholder in Angola Cables, with 51 percent.¹¹

Mobile phone services are provided by two private operators, UNITEL and Movitel, both of which have indirect ownership ties to the government. For example, 75 percent of UNITEL, the larger mobile phone operator with 80 percent of the market,¹² is held by three entities: state-owned Sonangol; a business venture run by the president's lieutenant general,¹³ Leopoldino do Nascimento; and the president's billionaire daughter, Isabel dos Santos, according to investigative reports. Both the general and Ms. dos Santos sit on the board of UNITEL.¹⁴

Meanwhile, 80 percent of Movitel is split between five ostensibly private Angolan companies—Portmill Investimentos e Telecomunicações with 40 percent, Modus Comunicare with 19 percent, Ipang-Indústria de Papel e Derivados with 10 percent, Lambda with 6 percent, and Novatel with 5 percent—that have majority shareholders who are senior officials within the president's office. For example, the majority shareholders of the Angolan investment company Lambda include Minister of Telecommunications and Information Technologies José Carvalho da Rocha, his deputy, and members of both their families.¹⁵ The remaining 20 percent of Movitel's capital is held by two state enterprises, Angola Telecom and Empresa Nacional de Correios e Telégrafos de Angola, with 18 percent and 2 percent, respectively.¹⁶

The 2011 Law on Electronic Communications and Information Company Services further enhances the government's ability to control the country's ICT sector.¹⁷ On paper, the law aims to ensure that ICTs in Angola are developed to play a fundamental role in ensuring citizens' universal access to information, transparency in the public sector, and participatory democracy. It also sets broader goals of poverty alleviation, competitiveness, productivity, employment, and consumer rights.¹⁸ Nevertheless, this legislation includes several provisions that, if implemented with bad intentions, can threaten online freedom.¹⁹ In particular, the law's provision for universal access to information is dependent upon the state's responsibility "in the creation and promotion of conditions that enable

10 Sonangol's telecom subsidiary, MSTelcom, discloses its full ownership of Nexus and ACS in: *Sonangol Notícias*, "9º Aniversário da Mstelcom: Ligando o País e o Mundo," August 2008, n° 17, Sonangol.

11 "Telecommunications in Angola," *Moses Malone*, http://mosesmalone.ga/Telecommunications_in_Angola.

12 Instituto Angolana dos Comunicações, "Estatísticas," <http://bit.ly/1R0kxgq>.

13 The investment company: Portmill, Investimentos e Telecomunicações.

14 Kerry A. Dolan, "Isabel Dos Santos, Daughter Of Angola's President, Is Africa's First Woman Billionaire," *Forbes*, January 23, 2013, <http://onforbes.es/1s19TrQ>.

15 Rafael Marques de Morais, "The Angolan Presidency: The Epicentre of Corruption," *Maka Angola* (blog), accessed October 20, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1R0kDod>.

16 Rafael Marques de Morais, "The Angolan Presidency: The Epicentre of Corruption," *Maka Angola* (blog).

17 Assembleia Nacional, *Lei das Comunicações Eletrónicas e dos Serviços da Sociedade da Informação* (Lei n° 23/11), art. 5.

18 Ministério Das Telecomunicações e Tecnologias de Informação, "The commitment of Angola in Communications and IT sector according to the Recommendations of the World Summit on the Information Society," (presentation, Geneva, Switzerland, June 2013), <http://bit.ly/1jemlbh>.

19 Miranda Law Firm, "Angola: Legal News," April-July 2011, <http://bit.ly/1GxSrn7>.

Angola

all citizens to access ICT.”²⁰ Accordingly, the law enables the head of government to “intervene when internet service providers jeopardize their social functions or there are situations that gravely compromise the rights of subscribers or users.”²¹ Because the law does not define “the social functions” or “situations” that could be compromised or the scope of intervention allowed, analysts believe that the law empowers the president to control the ICT sector at will.

Regulatory Bodies

The Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MCT) is responsible for oversight of the ICT sector, while the Angolan Institute for Communications (INACOM), established in 1999, serves as the sector’s regulatory body. Reporting to the MCT, INACOM determines the sector’s regulations and policies, sets prices for telecommunications services, and issues licenses. On paper, the regulatory body was set up as an independent public institution with both financial and administrative autonomy from the ministry,²² though in practice, its autonomy is fairly limited. According to reports by the ITU and World Bank, INACOM is not autonomous in its decision making process,²³ in part due to the ministerial appointment of the director general who can be dismissed for any reason. In addition, the MCT has been known to influence staff appointments, while other ministries are often involved in sector policy, leading to politically influenced regulatory decisions.

Limits on Content

No websites were blocked during the coverage period, though government requests to remove content from the internet were reported for the first time. An independent online news outlet received calls from government officials with directives to tone down or refrain from reporting on certain issues. Meanwhile, youth groups have increasingly flocked to Facebook to call for protests against government corruption, reflecting a weakening culture of fear within civil society.

Blocking and Filtering

To date, there have been no known incidents of the government blocking or filtering ICT content in Angola, and there are no restrictions on the type of information that can be exchanged through digital media technologies. Social media and communications apps such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and international blog-hosting services are freely available. Nevertheless, censorship of news and information in the traditional media sphere is common, leading to worries that similar efforts to control the information landscape will eventually spillover to the internet. In a concerning development, the independent online news outlet *Club-K* reported in July 2015 that the Angolan authorities had been seeking technical assistance from North Korea to restrict access to critical websites.²⁴

20 Assembleia Nacional, *Lei das Comunicações Eletrónicas e dos Serviços da Sociedade da Informação* (Lei nº 23/11), art. 5.

21 Assembleia Nacional, *Lei das Comunicações Eletrónicas e dos Serviços da Sociedade da Informação* (Lei nº 23/11), art. 26, 2.

22 Russell Southwood, “The Case for ‘Open Access’ Communications Infrastructure in Africa: The SAT-3/WASC cable – Angola case study,” Association for Progressive Communications, accessed August 30, 2013, 5, <http://bit.ly/1N1sn8O>.

23 International Telecommunication Union, “Angola Profile (latest data available: 2013).”

24 “Regime ensaia sistema para banir sites críticos,” *Club-K*, July 27, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1JUHylf>.

Content Removal

During the coverage period, government requests to remove content from the internet were reported for the first time in Angola. In one case, the request was extralegal, originating from a military general who arrested a Facebook user in April 2015 for a critical post about the general (see “Prosecutions and Detentions for Online Activities”). The Facebook user was forced to take down the offending post and to apologize in exchange for his release.²⁵

In May 2015, a court found journalist Rafael Marques de Morais guilty of criminal defamation for his 2011 book implicating the Angolan military with torture and corruption in the country’s diamond industry (see “Prosecutions and Detention for Online Activities”). In addition to a six-month suspended prison sentence, the court ordered all copies and references of de Morais’s book to be removed online.²⁶ Given the impossibility of the task, observers believe the court intended to find a way to send de Morais to prison later down the road.

Otherwise, there were no reported issues of intermediary liability for service or content providers. Predominant state ownership of the majority of Angola’s news outlets likely preempts the need for legal or administrative forms of censorship or content removal. According to an independent analyst, however, the government has been known to deliberately take down its own content when the authorities have wanted to prevent the public from accessing certain government information, such as specific laws.

Media, Diversity, and Content Manipulation

As a result of low rates of ICT access, radio, television, and print outlets—which are subject to high levels of government interference—remain the primary sources of information for the majority of Angolans. The president and members of the ruling People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) party own and tightly control a majority of the country’s media outlets, including those that are the most widely disseminated and accessed. Of the dozen or so privately owned newspapers, most are held by individuals connected to the government. The state media sector is comprised of the only daily newspaper in the country, *Jornal de Angola*, the broadcasting company *Rádio Nacional de Angola*, the *Angolan Public Television* (TPA), and the news agency *Angop*. All of these media outlets have websites of their own, none of which allow for comments from readers, enabling them to maintain their role as government mouthpieces.

Independent news outlets critical of the government do exist, with *Folha8* being the most prominent, though its audience is reached primarily through its print publication. An online portal based in Portugal launched in 2013, *Rede Angola*,²⁷ has become one of the main sources of alternative and independent online news on Angola, alongside the *Maka Angola* and *Club-K* news blogs. Nonetheless, the online information landscape lacks diversity and is unable to represent a variety of groups and viewpoints throughout the country due to both the concentration of internet access in urban areas and the limited space for critical voices in Angola’s general media sphere.

According to internal sources, some independent online news outlets receive regular calls from

²⁵ Interview by Freedom House consultant in May 2015.

²⁶ Paul Gallagher, “Celebrities join signatories calling on Angolan president to drop prosecution of blood diamonds author Rafael Marques de Morais,” *Independent*, June 2, 2015, <http://ind.pn/1hsfGbM>.

²⁷ *Rede Angola* website: <http://www.redeangola.info/>.

Angola

government officials with directives to tone down or refrain from reporting on certain issues. For example, in 2015, editors at the news blog, *Rede Angola*, reportedly received instructions from the authorities not to publish any news about the ongoing defamation case against journalist and blogger Rafael Marques de Morais.²⁸

Self-censorship is pervasive and commonly practiced by journalists in both state-run and private print outlets, though bloggers and social media users are less reluctant to express criticism of the president and ruling party. In the past few years, the internet and social media have become the last frontier for independent voices, with journalists, activists and opposition parties increasingly turning to digital platforms as a means to sidestep the country's longstanding restrictions on traditional media. Bloggers and internet users have been generally less fearful of expressing themselves and discussing controversial topics online than they might be offline. Nevertheless, there have been anecdotal reports of online self-censorship becoming more prevalent, reinforced by recent attacks on online journalists (see "Intimidation and Violence").²⁹ In addition, taboo topics related to corruption, abuse of power, land grabs, police brutality, and demolitions are often avoided.

The economic viability of independent outlets, both online and in print, is constrained by the lack of advertising revenue from both state and private sources, since it is often denied to news outlets that publish critical stories about the government. According to an Angolan media observer, the independent news blog *Rede Angola* struggled to receive advertising revenue from both private and public sources in 2014 and 2015 due to the critical cartoons it often publishes. It has only managed to stay afloat through financing from its wealthy owner, an Angolan media mogul.

Digital Activism

Despite the limited diversity of online news and content in Angola, social media has become the leading platform for citizens to criticize the government and react to alleged wrongdoings. Youth groups in particular have increasingly flocked to Facebook to call for protests against government corruption, reflecting a weakening culture of fear within civil society.³⁰ Throughout 2014, members of the Facebook group Central Angola 7311 (referring to March 7, 2011, the date of the first organized, nonpartisan protest in 35 years) planned a series of flash mob demonstrations via text message at government ministries to protest restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly. The authorities quickly dispersed each protest within minutes, often with tear gas and other violent means, but not before young protestors could document the protests (as well as the police response) through video and photographs, which they subsequently posted online to garner further attention to their movement.³¹ While the protests have yet to result in major political or social outcomes, Central Angola 7311 members contend that their mobilization efforts are building a foundation for further citizen activism.³²

28 Based on interviews with anonymous online journalists and editors.

29 Based on interviews with internet users and bloggers.

30 Central Angola 7311, website, <http://centralangola7311.net/>; Central Angola 7311:APagina, Facebook Cause Page, <http://on.fb.me/1VGCP7Y>.

31 Luaty Beirao and Lucia Da Silveira, "Five minutes: The length of a protest in Angola," *The Observers, France* 24, October 28, 2014, <http://f24.my/1NpBSBP>.

32 "Angola's Flash Mobs," *Africa Is A Country* (blog), December 9, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1LnV2kX>.

Violations of User Rights

The Angolan government increasingly focused its attention on critical comments posted on social media platforms, arresting one user for a Facebook post in April 2015. Leaked Hacking Team emails in July 2015 led to heightened concerns over unlawful surveillance of online and mobile communications. Online activists and critical news outlets were targeted for harassment and technical violence.

Legal Environment

The Angolan constitution provides for freedom of expression and the press, and the country was one of the first in Africa to enact a freedom of information law in 2002, though in practice, the government and authorities routinely flout these rights. In addition, stringent laws regarding state security and defamation run counter to constitutional guarantees, such as Article 26 of the 2010 state security law that penalizes individuals who insult the country or president in “public meetings or by disseminating words, images, writings, or sound” with prison sentences of up to three years.³³ The 2006 press law holds authors, editors, or directors of a publication criminally liable for libelous content.³⁴ If the author does not reside in the country or the text is not signed, the law establishes the circumstances in which the editor, director, or both may be held criminally responsible for grievous content.³⁵ Defamation is also a crime punishable by imprisonment, while politicians enjoy immunity from all prosecution. Meanwhile, the judiciary is subject to considerable political influence, with Supreme Court justices appointed to life terms by the president and without legislative approval.

A Law on Electronic Communications and Services of the Information Society was enacted in August 2011 that provides for citizens’ rights to privacy and security online, among other provisions regulating telecommunications. Nevertheless, the law also includes problematic aspects that may infringe on internet access, such as enabling the president as the head of government to “intervene when internet service providers jeopardize their social functions or there are situations that gravely compromise the rights of subscribers or users” (see “ICT Market”).³⁶ Because the law does not define “the social functions” or “situations” that could be compromised or the scope of intervention allowed, analysts believe that the law empowers the president to control the ICT sector at will.

Prosecutions and Detentions for Online Activities

In the past year, the Angolan government increasingly focused its attention on critical comments posted on social media platforms, arresting one user for a Facebook post in April 2015. The Facebook post in question was the user’s account of his abuse at the hands of a military general, prompting the general to arrest the Facebook user for the post. Detained in a military prison without charges,³⁷ he was released a week later only after he agreed to take down the offending post.

In May 2015, the ongoing defamation charges against investigative journalist and blogger Rafael Marques de Morais culminated in a guilty verdict, which carried a six-month suspended prison sen-

33 Human Rights Watch, “Angola: Revise New Security Law, Free Prisoners in Cabinda,” December 9, 2010, <http://bit.ly/1RvD6tN>.

34 Art. 71, 2, Assembleia Nacional, *Lei de Imprensa* (Lei 7/06), 2006, http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=179557.

35 Art. 71, 2, Assembleia Nacional, *Lei de Imprensa* (Lei 7/06), 2006.

36 Art. 71, 2, Assembleia Nacional, *Lei de Imprensa* (Lei 7/06), 2006, art. 26º, 2.

37 Maka Angola, Facebook Post, May 2, 2015, <http://on.fb.me/1OnDUm2>.

Angola

tence and orders to remove all copies and references of his investigatory exposé from the country and on the internet. De Morais had been initially charged in 2013 with nine counts of defamation against military generals for his 2011 book that accused the Angolan military of crimes against humanity in its dealings with the country's blood diamond industry, though his prominence as a blogger likely inflamed efforts to silence him.³⁸ While the trial could have resulted in a prison sentence of up to nine years and over US\$1 million in fines, the court's absurd order to remove all references of de Morais's book from the internet was viewed by observers as an effort to imprison the journalist later down the road, since it would be virtually impossible for de Morais to ensure compliance.

Surveillance, Privacy, and Anonymity

The government's ability to monitor and intercept the data and communications of Angolan citizens without adequate oversight is a major concern, particularly among human rights activists and journalists, though the full extent of the government's surveillance capabilities and practices is unknown. Sophisticated spyware discovered on an investigative journalist's laptop in 2013 that logged his activities suggests that, at a minimum, the government engages in the targeted surveillance of select individuals (see "Technical Attacks").³⁹

In June 2015, Wikileaks published leaked emails the Italian surveillance company Hacking Team, which revealed efforts by Angola's intelligence agency, SINSE, to acquire Hacking Team's notorious Remote Control System (RCS) sometime in 2013.⁴⁰ Sold to numerous repressive regimes around the world, the RCS spyware has the ability to steal files and passwords and intercept Skype calls and chats, among other malicious features. No further evidence surfaced as to whether the Angolan government eventually purchased or installed the spyware.

An April 2013 investigative report by the independent online news outlet *Club-K* revealed plans by intelligence and state security services to implement an electronic monitoring system that could track email and other digital communications. According to *Club-K*, the sophisticated monitoring equipment had been imported from Germany, and the deal included the services of German technicians who would assist in the system's installation on a military base in Cabo Ledo, home of the Technical and Operational Battalion (*Batalhão Técnico Operacional*—BATOPE).⁴¹ In early 2014, an anonymous researcher acquired corroborating information from military sources that the monitoring system had been installed at the BATOPE base around September 2013.⁴² Further evidence surfaced in November 2013 of at least one major ISP hosting a spyware system directly on its server, as part of the German company setup. No new information regarding the surveillance system and its use has since come to light.⁴³

Meanwhile, SIM card registration requirements announced in early 2015 threaten to constrain the ability of mobile phone users to communicate anonymously. The strong presence of the state in the

38 Elena Pramesberger, "Angolan journalists Rafael Marques de Morais convicted of defamation," International Press Institute and IFEX, May 29, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1L8BGkG>.

39 Janet Gunter, "Digital Surveillance in Angola and Other 'Less Important' African Countries," *Global Voices Advocacy*, February 26, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1LjKxn4>.

40 Daniel Finnan, "Kenyan government asked Hacking Team to attack dissident website," *Radio France Internationale*, July 17, 2015, <http://rfi.my/1jc5CVp>.

41 "Alemães montam sistema de escuta em Angola," [Germans assemble listening system in Angola] *Club-K*, April 23, 2012, <http://bit.ly/1jen5gw>.

42 Anonymous Freedom House researcher, March 2014.

43 According to FH interviews.

Angola

ownership structure of Angola's telecoms, particularly of mobile phone operators, suggests that the authorities are likely able to wield their influence over service providers and require ICT providers to assist in the monitoring of communications, if desired. For instance, the top adviser to the head of the Intelligence Bureau at the Presidency, General Leopoldino do Nascimento, is also the chairman and shareholder of Unitel. Meanwhile, the head of the Intelligence Bureau, General Manuel Hélder Vieira Dias "Kopelipa," holds a majority share (about 59 percent) in Movitel.⁴⁴ The deputy CEO and Chief Technology Officer of Unitel, Amílcar Safeca, is the brother of Aristides Safeca, the secretary of ICTs who in turn is a shareholder of Movitel. Such interweaving of political and business interests through family connections is compounded by the lack of rule of law.

Intimidation and Violence

Violence against journalists in the traditional media sphere is unfortunately common in Angola, and online activists have been increasingly targeted. In 2014, youth movement protestors of the Central Angola 7311 Facebook group routinely reported abuse and torture while in detention for their participation in antigovernment protests.⁴⁵ Online writers and investigative journalists, including Rafael Marques de Morais, are also frequently subject to intimidation and attacks for their work, though no incidents were reported during the coverage period.

Technical Attacks

Independent and diaspora news websites are frequently targeted by technical attacks, such as hacking and denial-of-service (DoS) attacks, particularly during periods of political contestation. In 2015, the critical news blog *Maka Angola* was attacked and taken down for several days at a time in the lead-up to the criminal defamation case against the outlet's owner and investigative journalist, Rafael Marques de Morais, who has been a frequent target of technical violence. In 2013, de Morais's personal laptop was attacked with customized malware,⁴⁶ which international experts linked to a multinational with strong ties to Angolan military officials.⁴⁷

44 General Kopelipa openly represents Portmill, Investimentos e Telecomunicações, which holds 40 percent of Movitel. He is also a co-owner of Banco Espírito Santo Angola which is a major Movitel investor as well. In 2010, journalist Rafael Marques de Morais found in an investigation that Portmill had been set up by Gen. Kopelipa, Gen. Leopoldino do Nascimento and the current vice-president of Angola, Manuel Vicente.

45 Luaty Beirao, "Protests in Angola: 'Police are even torturing women now,'" *The Observers, France 24*, November 27, 2014, <http://f24.my/1hsh6Df>.

46 There is a detailed account of how the malware was discovered during an international conference. See: Michael Moynihan, "Hackers are Spying On You: Inside the World of Digital Espionage," *Newsweek*, May 29, 2013, <http://bit.ly/1s29LJY>.

47 Gunter, "Digital Surveillance in Angola and Other 'Less Important' African Countries."