

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/angola-journalist-gets-one-year-jail-term-09-03-2011,39732.html>

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Africa - Angola

Media in danger

## Journalist gets one-year jail term, media harassed and censored

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Reporters Without Borders is shocked by the growing problems that Angola's journalists are experiencing and the mistrust and hostility that the authorities are showing towards some media. A reporter has been sentenced to a year in prison and several media and journalists have been threatened, roughed up or censored in the past two weeks.

"It is a disgrace for Angola that a journalist has been given a jail sentence for an alleged case of defamation that has not been proved," Reporters Without Borders said. "We call for this conviction to be overturned on appeal. And we are disturbed that the authorities are controlling freedom of expression so closely and sometimes try to gag media by harassing journalists."

The press freedom organization added: "This tendency has been increasing of late as the ruling Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) prepares its upcoming congress and the government is clearly concerned about the possibility that the protests rocking the Arab world could spread to Angola."

### After previous harassment, freelance reporter gets a year in jail

**Armando Chicoca**, a freelancer who reports for the US government's *Voice of America* radio station and several independent Angolan magazines was sentenced last week to a year in prison for allegedly defaming Antonio Vissandula, the top judge in the southern city of Namibe. His lawyer, David Mendès, who was unable to attend the trial, intends to file an appeal today.

Currently held in Namibe's main prison, Chicoca was prosecuted for reporting the claims of Judge Vissandula's former maid that she was fired for rejecting his sexual advances.

Chicoca spent 33 days in prison in 2007 for covering the protests that followed the demolition of a market. He received death threats earlier this year and his brother was murdered in January in still unclear circumstances.

### Threats, harassment and censorship

Four journalists employed by the *Jornal Novo* weekly – **Pedro Cardoso**, **Afonso Francisco**, **Idálio Kandé** and **Ana Margoso** – were arrested while covering an anti-government demonstration in Luanda's Independence Square on 7 March and were held for several hours by the police. All were treated roughly and Margoso was forced to show all the messages in her mobile phone and to clean her cell before her release.

In another case of overt censorship, state security officials ordered the company that prints the weekly *Folha 8* to stop printing the latest issue last weekend. The authorities have had the newspaper's editor, **William Tonet** (photo), in their sights for years and [he was banned from leaving the country](#) in 2009.

Reporters Without Borders has also learned that two women reporters working for *Radio Ecclesia*,



**Zenina Volola** and **Matilde Vanda**, were threatened by state security officials while covering the opening of a congress of the Angolan Women's Organization (OMA), the women's wing of the MPLA, on 27 February.

They were first rebuffed by MPLA secretary-general Júlio Paulo "Dino Matross," who refused to give them an interview, saying in a show of contempt and mistrust: "I do not speak to *Ecclesia* because you mistreat us." Then state security officials stopped them and ordered them to surrender their recordings, saying: "If you kill with information, we kill with guns."

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