

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/angola-three-journalists-including-23-09-2013,45216.html>

Africa - Angola

Hounded

Three journalists, including leading investigative reporter, arrested

23 September 2013

Reporters Without Borders condemns the repeated harassment of investigative reporters by the authorities in Angola. In the latest example, police arrested the three journalists for interviewing a group of young anti-government demonstrators immediately after their release in Luanda on 20 September.

The three journalists – **Alexandre Solombe Neto** of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) and vice-president of the Union of Angola Journalists (SJA), **Coque Mukuta**, *Voice of America* correspondent, and **Rafael Marques de Morais**, a freelancer and anti-corruption activist – were interrogated and manhandled by the police until a court freed them after five hours.

Neither the police nor court officials offered any explanation for their arrest or for the decision to hold them.

“The arrest of three journalists who were just doing their professional duty is unacceptable,” Reporters Without Borders said. “The harassment to which De Morais in particular is being subjected must stop at once. It reflects the government’s fear of what he has been reporting.

“We express our unreserved support for the protests that have been voiced by international human rights organizations and we urge the government to respect the work of investigative journalists, which serves to inform the Angolan people.”

Marques said he and his two colleagues were arrested while talking to young members of the Angolan Revolutionary Movement, who had just been released following their arrest the previous day for protesting against social injustice and President José Eduardo dos Santos’ authoritarianism.

Formed mainly by students and young professionals, the movement has been calling on Dos Santos to stand down and has been protesting against the demolition of housing, forced evictions and police violence. Recently reelected for another five-year term, Dos Santos has ruled Angola for the past 34 years.

The authorities have repeatedly used harassment in an attempt to silence De Morais, who is known for [his activist blog](#) and his 2011 book “Diamantes de Sangue: Corrupção e Tortura em Angola” (Blood Diamonds: Corruption and Torture in Angola) accusing the heads of Angola’s diamond industry of atrocities.

He is currently the target of 11 defamation suits by military and government officials and leading Angolan companies.

Defamation continues to be a crime punishable by imprisonment in Angola and, under a 2006 law, journalists who criticize the government face grave reprisals. The authorities often use this law to silence journalists who expose corruption in the state or private sector.

Angola is ranked 130th out of 179 countries in the [2013 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

Photo: Investigative journalist, Rafael Marques de Morais

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