

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

QUOTE

10 December 2019

Angola: Security forces violently disperse pro-independence march

In response to the violent and excessive use of force by state security forces today to break up a peaceful pro-independence march in Cabinda Province, and the arrest of dozens of protesters and their leaders, Amnesty International's Regional Director for Southern Africa, Deprose Muchena said:

"The heavy deployment of security personnel armed with batons and guns – and the subsequent excessive use of force against peaceful protesters in order to prevent this planned protest - is yet another indication that authorities are not prepared to tolerate dissent.

"This use of unlawful and intimidating tactics to suppress a peaceful protest totally disregards the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

"Those arrested must be immediately and unconditionally released. People must be allowed to freely exercise their human rights. Angola can only benefit from a plurality of voices."

Background

Protesters gathered in the city of Cabinda today to march for a referendum for autonomy from Angola, as they believe that they are being marginalized. Authorities responded by deploying security forces in high numbers to block the march. Cabinda accounts for most of the country's oil output, the main driver of the economy.

Human rights lawyer, Arão Bula Tempo, has had his house surrounded by armed police officers in the lead up to today's march. Tempo is a prominent human rights lawyer and is believed to have been put under surveillance for his human rights work and political views.

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