



REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA
PERMANENT MISSION OF ANGOLA TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA

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The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Angola to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council and has the honour to transmit herewith the comments of the Government of Angola regarding the Joint Communication Ref: AL AGO 2/2025, issued following the acts of vandalism and public disorder that occurred in certain cities of Angola on 28, 29 and 30 July 2025.

The Permanent Mission wishes to express its sincere appreciation for the Special Procedures' engagement and for the constructive manner in which the related concerns were raised. Angola values the role of the Special Procedures in promoting dialogue, understanding and transparency, and considers such exchanges an essential part of our shared commitment to the advancement of human rights.

Finally, Angola reiterates its readiness to maintain and deepen its cooperation with the United Nations human rights system, including the Special Procedures, treaty bodies and the Human Rights Council.

The Permanent Mission avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council the assurances of its highest consideration.

Annex: Comments of the Government of Angola in response to Joint Communication Ref: AL AGO 2/2025.


Ambassador
Permanent Representative


Officer-in-charge
Special Procedures Branch
OHCHR



REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA

**INTERMINISTERIAL COMMISSION FOR THE NATIONAL PREPARATION OF
HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS**

**ANGOLA'S RESPONSE TO THE JOINT COMMUNICATION FROM THE
SPECIAL PROCEDURES OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS
COUNCIL**

1. INTRODUCTION

Through the Permanent Diplomatic Mission of Angola to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva, a joint communication was addressed to the Angolan State by the Special Rapporteurs on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association; extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; the situation of human rights defenders; torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; as well as by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

In their Joint Communication, the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights refer to acts of vandalism and rioting that occurred in several cities in Angola on 28, 29 and 30 July 2025.

They state that they received, from sources not identified in the document, information alleging the indiscriminate use of force against peaceful protesters, including lethal force resulting in hundreds of injuries and several deaths; the arbitrary detention of peaceful protesters, passers-by, journalists, and individuals not directly involved in the protests; as well as the harassment and persecution of human rights defenders during and after the aforementioned incidents.

The Joint Communication concludes with a series of questions involving matters falling under the remit of various State institutions, which hereby formulate the official position of the Angolan State.

2. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The exercise of the right to freedom of assembly is one of the pillars of democracy, enabling effective participation in public affairs and contributing to the building of a free and just society, in accordance with the Constitution and the law.

The realization of this fundamental right entails the State's duty to ensure public order, the physical integrity of citizens and the protection of property in general, such that order and justice prevail as the essential conditions for respect for the law and for human dignity.

The acts of rioting, vandalization and looting, committed in an organized and systematic manner, stemmed from a suspension of taxi services announced by the New Alliance of Taxi Drivers of Angola (ANATA) and the Association of Taxi Drivers of Angola (ATA), propagated through social media, and carried out mainly by taxi drivers and dispatchers in the provinces of Luanda, Icolo e Bengo; while in Cuando Cubango, Malanje, Huambo, Benguela, Huíla and Bengo, these acts were perpetrated by members of the public.

What occurred were premeditated acts of destruction of public and private property, robbery and looting of commercial establishments, as well as threats and coercion against peaceful citizens preventing them from circulating or reporting to work, even when using their own means of transportation and without belonging to the taxi-driver category—the only group that had declared a strike.

The use of police force in situations of real risk and imminent threat, within the context of violent demonstrations or disturbances affecting public order, social peace and the sense of security within communities, is a constitutional prerogative.

The protests were diverted from their initial purpose by organized groups and radical elements who, acting outside the law, instigated acts of vandalism, destruction of public and private property, and direct confrontations with law enforcement authorities.

Attacks on commercial establishments, assaults against citizens and law-enforcement officers, as well as attempts to incite civil disobedience through social media, were recorded.

A large number of the petitioners involved in these actions acted in a concerted manner, in organized groups and simultaneously across various streets of the city. They carried firearms, machetes, hoes, knives, and other blunt objects; they burned tyres on public roads, as well as refuse containers, private vehicles, and public buses, and threw lit bottles filled with gasoline at all vehicles travelling on public roads. As if that were not enough, they also

attempted, in a coordinated fashion, to invade private residences and residential condominiums, with the undisclosed intent of looting the property and belongings of their owners and of violating the women and children of family heads.

A true scenario of fear and terror ensued, causing significant trauma to citizens due to the prevailing sense of public insecurity. These days will remain etched in the memory of law-abiding citizens because of the violence and brutality with which the wrongdoers acted.

As a consequence of these actions, a National Police officer was fatally shot, and other members of the National Fire Service were seriously injured.

To maintain public order, the National Police of Angola deployed an operational and tactical structure comprising three levels of intervention, articulated with one another and activated progressively according to the degree of risk and threat.

The actions of the Police Forces on 28, 29 and 30 July 2025 complied with the principle of the progressive use of force, and isolated cases of more serious confrontations are under transparent investigation, with judicial accountability to follow in accordance with the Angolan legal framework.

A total of **1,686 citizens were detained** and **60 minors were held** for involvement in acts of vandalism; the minors were released to their families within 24 hours. Given the high number of detainees and the considerable volume of summary proceedings, the National Council of Lawyers of the Angolan Bar Association mobilized its members to assist in the proceedings and ensure the defence of the accused.

It is important to emphasize that, although deeply regrettable, such incidents are not unprecedented in the international context. Similar situations have recently been observed in various countries, demonstrating that, across different regions, the free expression of ideas can, in certain circumstances, degenerate into public disorder.

Throughout 2025, significant episodes were recorded, for example:

- a) In Spain, anti-tourism demonstrations mobilized thousands of people in several cities;
- b) In France, the 1 May protests brought together more than 300,000 citizens, and other mobilizations against racism and the far-right involved tens of thousands;
- c) In the United States, initiatives such as “Hands Off” and “50501” brought millions to the streets, with some protests escalating into

disturbances requiring intervention by the National Guard, including within the context of “Black Lives Matter”.

This international scenario reveals a pattern: manifestations of social discontent — even when legitimate — may be instrumentalized and escalate into actions endangering public order, thereby requiring proportional, lawful and institutionally balanced responses.

The acts of vandalism against private companies and commercial establishments during the aforementioned days discourage private investment, reduce the supply of goods, services and jobs for the population, and therefore can only be understood as acts of economic sabotage intended to further aggravate the social situation.

The Angolan Executive decided to adopt support measures for companies affected by the wave of vandalism in order to expedite the restocking of goods and safeguard threatened jobs.

The National Security Council, meeting on 5 August, appealed to the population not to adhere to content disseminated on social media — much of which produced using Artificial Intelligence — that incites disobedience, hatred and rebellion, urging citizens to adopt civic, orderly conduct and to respect the authorities, who are engaged in guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of citizens as provided for in the Constitution and the law.

Likewise, the Council of the Republic, meeting on 11 August, called upon the Angolan population to maintain a civic and orderly posture, exercising their rights and freedoms responsibly and consciously, and respecting the authorities, while also avoiding the dissemination of misinformation on digital platforms in order to safeguard the wellbeing of all.

The Ministry of the Interior and the National Police, in strict compliance with the Constitution and international human-rights norms, adopted proportional and lawful measures to restore public order, protect the lives of citizens and ensure the normal functioning of institutions.

It is reiterated that the actions of the National Police respect and promote civil and political rights within the framework of legality and democratic order, value dialogue as an essential instrument of governance, reinforce transparency and combat the instrumentalization of violence as a form of protest, with the aim of strengthening the Democratic State and the Rule of Law.

3. DETENTION OF ACTIVISTS AND JOURNALISTS

3.1. Preliminary Point

We acknowledge that international appeals concerning alleged human-rights violations raise concerns that must be addressed freely. However, international best practices recommend that domestic legal remedies and internal mechanisms of redress be exhausted prior to approaching international or extraterritorial bodies. Such bodies, moreover, should not intervene without first verifying whether domestic remedies have been duly exhausted.

There is no information indicating that citizens **Oswaldo Kaholo** and **Serrote de Oliveira** exhausted internal mechanisms (local remedies) or that such mechanisms failed to resolve their situation. Angola has legal avenues, competent bodies and extra-procedural mechanisms available to citizens before resorting to international institutions.

The Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups of the Special Procedures should take these elements into consideration; otherwise, they risk distorting an internationally accepted and coherent practice. Accordingly, we hereby register our objection.

With regard to the alleged detention of activists and journalists, we inform that we have **no records of journalists detained** in penitentiary units in Angola.

3.2. Concerning Citizen Oswaldo Kaholo

According to the records of the Public Prosecutor's Office attached to the Criminal Investigation Services in Luanda, a criminal case was opened under No. **2801/25-I.PGR (2912/25-05.SIC)**, naming Mr **Oswaldo Sérgio Correia Kaholo** as a defendant. He was detained on 21 July 2025 under a warrant issued pursuant to Article 254(2) of the Angolan Code of Criminal Procedure (CPPA), which empowers the Public Prosecutor to order detention outside of flagrante delicto in the context of a criminal proceeding. The reasons for his detention were explained to him from the outset and stated in the warrant that was presented to him.

The grounds for detention concern his dissemination, through TikTok, WhatsApp and Facebook, of statements undermining the constitutional order of Angola, inciting the population to invade the homes of General Officers of the Armed Forces and Commissioners of the National Police, as well as to overthrow the legally constituted Government of Angola through violence — the Government elected in the free, democratic and fair General Elections of August 2022.

Exercising his fundamental right of appeal and assisted at all times by legal counsel, **Mr Osvaldo Sérgio Correia Kaholo** challenged the preventive detention order, which was nevertheless upheld.

Given the date of his detention, the applicable time limit has not elapsed; should an indictment be issued, the period will extend to six (6) months until a committal order or trial date is set, depending on the reassessment of the coercive measure.

In summary, in the absence of violations of legal deadlines and where successive reassessments uphold the necessity of detention, the Angolan criminal system allows preventive detention of up to **18 months**, or **20 months** in cases of particular complexity, as provided for in Article 283 of the CPPA.

3.3. Concerning Citizen Serrote de Oliveira

According to the records of the Public Prosecutor's Office attached to the Criminal Investigation Services in Luanda, a criminal case was also opened under Nos. **52221/025-NUP** and **8427/25-DCCO**, naming **Mr Serrote José de Oliveira** as a defendant. He was detained on 28 July 2025 and charged with the crime of disruption of the provision of public services, as provided for and punishable under Articles 4 and 10 of Law No. 13/24 of 29 August — the Law on Crimes of Vandalism of Public Goods and Services.

Accompanied by his lawyer, **Mr Serrote José de Oliveira** was brought before the Judge of Guarantees — the authority responsible for overseeing procedural acts and safeguarding fundamental rights during the preliminary criminal investigation — who questioned him, thus ensuring the exercise of the adversarial process with legal assistance and full respect for procedural guarantees.

After the hearing, the Judge of Guarantees confirmed the charges and imposed preventive detention under Article 279 of the CPPA.

Furthermore, between January and October 2025, the Ombudsman conducted visits to several penitentiary establishments in Luanda — namely the Central Luanda Penitentiary (twice), Viana Penitentiary (twice), and São Paulo Prison Hospital (once). A visit was also conducted to the Calomboloca Penitentiary in Icolo e Bengo Province. In none of these establishments was any situation of excessive preventive detention concerning **Mr Serrote José de Oliveira** reported or observed.

It should be noted that the detainee has been monitored by the Assistance and Penitentiary Rehabilitation Section, receiving psychological support and

rehabilitation services. He has also received medical care following the removal of a bullet lodged in his left leg. He receives regular family support and has expressed his wish to continue receiving such assistance.

4. HARASSMENT AGAINST THE FAMILIES OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

The Joint Communication alleges that **Mr Alfredo Agostinho**, spouse of human rights defender **Laurinda Gouveia**, was physically assaulted until he lost consciousness and required medical assistance inside the couple's home on 31 July 2025, resulting in severe injuries, psychological suffering and ongoing medical supervision.

Investigations were conducted to ascertain whether any formal complaint had been filed by Ms Laurinda Gouveia or her spouse, Mr Alfredo Agostinho, before the competent judicial authorities. No such record was found; therefore, the allegation is untrue.

Nevertheless, considering that personal integrity is an inviolable fundamental right, the Angolan State stands fully prepared — should this information prove accurate — to receive a complaint, investigate the case and hold the perpetrators accountable under criminal law, whether they are private citizens or public agents.

5. OTHER GENERAL ISSUES RAISED

In respect of the provinces mentioned in the Joint Communication, and following contact with the Public Prosecutors responsible for each province, it is confirmed that, with the exception of **Huíla Province**, which recorded no detentions, no proceedings and no trials related to the events of 28, 29 and 30 July 2025, the remaining provinces — namely Luanda, Benguela, Huambo, Malanje, Bengo and Lunda Norte — did indeed register the opening of criminal cases.

The Public Prosecutor's Office, as holder of criminal action and guardian of democratic legality, assessed on a case-by-case basis whether the facts warranted the initiation of criminal proceedings, examined the procedural guarantees of the accused, and disregarded any illegal or arbitrary matters, thereby restoring freedom, ordering further investigation where necessary and archiving others.

Most cases involved individuals who took advantage of the situation to commit acts of vandalism and looting of private and public property, which required a firm and immediate response from the police and authorities to ensure public order, peace and security.

Regarding the presence of minors among the detainees, during August, September and October 2025 the Ombudsman, in accordance with its schedule of regular visits, inspected penitentiary establishments in the provinces of Luanda and Icolo e Bengo. No minors under the age of 16 were found in detention during these visits.

The Ombudsman received no complaints from citizens regarding such matters. It should also be noted that whenever the Ombudsman detects or becomes aware of violations of minors' rights in the juvenile justice system, it immediately refers the matter to the Public Prosecutor or Judiciary and urges the penitentiary establishment to correct the illegality.

6. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Angolan State is a full member of the United Nations and of the Human Rights Council of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Angola is a signatory and State Party to the principal international and regional human-rights treaties, which, by virtue of Articles 13 and 26 of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola, form an integral part of its legal system and have direct applicability in its domestic legal order.

The Angolan State respects and complies with its obligation to submit periodic reports under each of the treaties it has ratified to the respective UN Treaty Bodies.

The Angolan State vehemently condemns criminal acts and regrets that protests purported to be initially legitimate were distorted and instrumentalized by groups resorting to violence, thereby jeopardizing social peace and public security.

The Angolan State reiterates its respect for the fundamental rights, freedoms and guarantees of all citizens and reaffirms its commitment to fulfilling its international and national obligations, presenting itself as a State whose human-rights situation is known and recognized as positive by the competent organs of the United Nations.

Finally, the Angolan State expresses its willingness to continue maintaining constructive dialogue with human-rights mechanisms in accordance with the rules and procedures governing these mechanisms.