

**Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and the  
Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences**

REFERENCE: AL G/SO 214 (33-27) G/SO 214 (89-15)  
AGO 4/2013

29 August 2013

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacities as Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 17/5 and 23/25.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning **allegations of sorcery-related killings of women in the town of Cafunfo, Lunda Norte Province**.

According to the information received:

On 5 May 2013, Ms. Visalta Kuricanza Paulo Muacahia, a 57 year old peasant, was found dead nearby the Tafe River, in Cafunfo, Lunda Norte Province. Her body was naked and tied up, her genitals mutilated and her face and legs burnt. On 7 May 2013 a similar killing was reported in the area of Tchimango. Ms. Aida Sanehena, aged 47, was hanged near a mining area. Her face and some body parts were also burnt. According to reports, two other killings of a similar nature have been reported on similar grounds, on 8 December 2012, and on 14 April 2013.

Sorcery-related killings of women have been reported in recent years in the area of Cafunfo, including at least 12 cases since 2010. Approximately 5 of these cases have been either investigated and its perpetrators brought to justice or are currently awaiting trial. Reports received describe these killings being committed as part of witchcraft rituals. They often involve local middle-aged women returning from their farming fields. Victims are usually raped and burnt in their forearms and knees before being strangled. In some instances, allegations also detail cases where the victim's sexual organs and body parts have been mutilated.

The first of these 12 cases took place on the 9 July 2010 where a man killed his own wife removing her genitals and attempting to deliver them to a local diamond

trader. The perpetrator was tried and convicted in the provincial capital of Dundo, where he is reported to be serving his sentence. The accused allegedly identified a local trader who offered rewards for the victim's organs. The trader was subsequently interrogated by the Public Prosecutor and then released.

On 15 June 2013, at approximately 9:00 hours, a demonstration was held in Cafunfo. The protest was organized by the Party for Social Renewal in response to their perceived lack of prosecution for all sorcery-related killings committed against women in the area. Although there have been conflicting reports on the number of protestors, it has been indicated that there could have been up to 8000 protestors, including women. The police and the army reportedly dispersed the demonstration, proceeding with the arrest of 21 persons, including members of the opposition, on charges of social disobedience. According to the police, protesters acted violently and did not respect the agreed itinerary of the demonstration.

Without prejudging the accuracy of these allegations, serious concern is expressed at allegations received of sorcery-related killings of women in the area of Cafunfo. Concern is further expressed at allegations of a failure by the State authorities to act with due diligence to prevent and investigate all sorcery-killings, and to bring all perpetrators to account.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of these allegations, we wish to draw the attention of your Excellency's Government to the principles set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which Angola acceded to on 10 January 1992. Articles 3 and 6 (1) of these instruments respectively guarantee the right of every individual to life and security and provide that these rights shall be protected by law and that no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life. We draw to the attention of your Excellency's Government the duty to investigate, prosecute, and punish all violations of the right to life. We urge your Excellency's Government in line with the Principles on Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions (Prevention and Investigation Principles), in particular Principle 9, that there must be thorough, prompt and impartial investigations of all suspected cases of extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions.

We would also like to bring to your Excellency's attention Article 4 of the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women which underlines the responsibility of States to condemn violence against women and which calls on States not to invoke any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimination. States should pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating violence against women and, to this end, should adopt all appropriate measures, especially in the field of education, to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women and to eliminate prejudices, customary practices and all other practices based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes and on stereotyped roles for men and women.

We would further like to make reference to the same Article 4 (c & d) of the Declaration, which notes the responsibility of States to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and, in accordance with national legislation, punish acts of violence against women, whether those acts are perpetrated by the State or by private persons. To this end, States should develop penal, civil, labour and administrative sanctions in domestic legislation to punish and redress the wrongs caused to women who are subjected to violence. Women who are subjected to violence should be provided with access to the mechanisms of justice and, as provided for by national legislation, to just and effective remedies for the harm that they have suffered. States should, moreover, inform women of their rights in seeking redress through such mechanisms.

Moreover, as it is our responsibility under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention we would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Are the facts alleged in the above summary accurate?
2. Has a complaint been lodged by or on behalf of the alleged victims?
3. Please provide the details, and where available the results, of any investigation, and judicial or other inquiries carried out in relation to these cases, including the killing of Ms. Visalta Kuricanza Paulo Muacahia and Ms. Aida Sanehena. If no inquiries have taken place, or if they have been inconclusive, please explain why.
4. Please clarify whether compensation has been made available to the families of the victims identified.

We would appreciate a response within sixty days. Your Excellency's Government's response will be made available in a report to the Human Rights Council for its consideration.

While waiting for your response, we urge your Excellency's Government to ensure that, in the event that your investigations support or suggest the above allegations to be correct, any person responsible of the alleged violations should be held accountable. We also request that your Excellency's Government adopt effective measures to prevent the recurrence of these acts.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Christof Heyns  
Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions

Rashida Manjoo  
Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and  
consequences