

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression

Ref.: AL AGO 4/2025

(Please use this reference in your reply)

23 December 2025

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacities as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders and Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 52/4 and 52/9.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning the persecution of human rights defender Mr. Pedro Domingos André between July and October 2025, with reported involvement of Criminal Investigation Service agents.

Mr. Pedro Domingos André, also known as "Paka," is an Angolan human rights defender. He serves as the coordinator and spokesperson of the movement FURIA-99, the United Force against Repression and Injustices in Angola. His work focuses on documenting and denouncing cases of arbitrary detention and other violations committed against human rights defenders, activists, and vulnerable communities.

According to the information received:

On 22 July 2025, agents of the Criminal Investigation Service (SIC) entered Mr. Domingos André's residence without a warrant, conducted a search, and photographed him. On 23 July, he went to the local police station to report the incident. He was informed that the agents involved would be held accountable, and an apology was issued. However, several days later, his neighbours reported that SIC agents returned to the neighbourhood asking questions about him, prompting Mr. Domingos André to temporarily leave his residence and seek safety elsewhere.

On 1 September, the media outlet Deutsche Welle published an interview with Mr. Domingos André, in which he criticises the Angolan authorities for arbitrarily detaining an Angolan human rights defender.

On 7 October 2025, two SIC agents were again seen asking neighbours about Mr. Domingos André. On 13 October, around 1 a.m., there was an attempted break-in at his residence. Unidentified individuals tried to access the roof but fled when neighbours intervened.

Without wishing to prejudge these allegations, we express our concern over the reported persecution of Mr. Domingos André, and we fear that he is targeted because of his human rights work, particularly his efforts to promote and protect the rights of arbitrarily detained human rights defenders in Angola. These allegations are especially concerning due to the alleged involvement of the SIC, an agency of the Ministry of

Interior. If confirmed that the reported violations against Mr. Domingos André were committed by state agents, Angolan authorities would be violating international law protecting human rights defenders from persecution based on their peaceful and legitimate work. We are further concerned that such acts as described above may lead to a significant chilling effect on civil society in Angola.

In connection with the above alleged facts and concerns, please refer to the **Annex on Reference to international human rights law** attached to this letter which cites international human rights instruments and standards relevant to these allegations.

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. Please provide any additional information and/or comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please provide information on the steps taken by the relevant authorities to investigate the alleged persecution of Mr. Domingos André, and the reported involvement of the SIC in this persecution. In case no investigations have been undertaken, please explain why.
3. Please describe what measures have been implemented to ensure that Mr. Domingos André, as well as all other human rights defenders in Angola, can effectively continue their work as human rights defenders, operate in a safe and enabling environment, and carry out their legitimate activities without fear of harassment, violence or criminalization of any kind.

This communication and any response received from your Excellency's Government will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) within 60 days. They will also subsequently be made available in the usual report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

While awaiting a reply, we urge that all necessary interim measures be taken to halt the alleged violations and prevent their re-occurrence and in the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person(s) responsible for the alleged violations.

We may publicly express our concerns in the near future as, in our view, the information upon which the press release will be based is sufficiently reliable to indicate a matter warranting immediate attention. We also believe that the wider public should be alerted to the potential implications of the above-mentioned allegations. The press release will indicate that we have been in contact with your Excellency's Government's to clarify the issue/s in question.

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

Mary Lawlor
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders

Irene Khan
Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion
and expression

Annex

Reference to international human rights law

In connection with above alleged facts and concerns, we would like to draw the attention of your Excellency's Government to the following international human rights standards. We draw particular attention to articles 9, 17, and 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), acceded to by Angola on 10 January 1992, which guarantees the right of all persons to liberty and security of person.

Article 9 of the ICCPR enshrines the right to liberty and security of person, establishing that no one shall be deprived of his or her liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law, as well as the right to legal assistance from the moment of detention. International law on deprivation of liberty includes the right to be presented with an arrest warrant, which is procedurally inherent to the right to liberty and security of person and the prohibition of arbitrary deprivation of liberty, as well as under principles 2, 4 and 10 of the Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment. Article 9(4) also entitles everyone detained to challenge the legality of such detention before a judicial authority. The United Nations Basic Principles and Guidelines on Remedies and Procedures on the Right of Anyone Deprived of Their Liberty to Bring Proceedings Before a Court state that the right to challenge the lawfulness of detention before a court is a self-standing human right, the absence of which constitutes a human rights violation.

Article 17 states that "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his honour and reputation" and that "Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks."

Article 19 of the ICCPR guarantees the right to freedom of opinion and expression, which includes the right "to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of their frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media..." This right applies online as well as offline and includes political discourse, commentary on one's own and on public affairs, discussion of human rights and journalism among others, and encompasses not only the exchange of information that is favourable, but also that which may be deeply offensive (CCPR/C/GC/34, para. 11). The Committee further asserts that there is a duty of States to put in place effective measures to protect against attacks aimed at silencing those exercising their right to freedom of expression. Any restriction on the right to freedom of expression must (i) be provided by law; (ii) pursue one of the legitimate aims for restriction, which are the respect of the rights or reputations of others and the protection of national security or of public order (*ordre public*), or of public health or morals; and (iii) be necessary and proportionate for those objectives. (CCCPR/C/GC/22-23). With regards to proportionality, the Human Rights Committee has clarified that the restrictions must be "the least intrusive instrument among those which might achieve their protective function". (CCPR/C/GC/34, para. 34). In line with these norms, States shall also not impose any unjustified or arbitrary restrictions on the access of foreign journalists.

Pursuant to the fundamental principles set forth in the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, also known as the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, in particular, articles 1 and 2 of the Declaration which state that everyone has the right to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels and that each State has a prime responsibility and duty to protect, promote and implement all human rights and fundamental freedoms. We would also like to draw particular attention to the following provisions of the Declaration:

- article 6, which holds that everyone has the right to freely publish, impart or disseminate to others views, information and knowledge on all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rights to study, discuss, form and hold opinions on the observance, both in law and in practice, of all human rights;
- article 9, paragraph 5, which holds that States shall conduct a prompt and impartial investigation or ensure that an inquiry takes place whenever there is reasonable ground to believe that a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms has occurred in any territory under its jurisdiction;
- article 12, paragraph 2, holding that States shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of their legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the Declaration.