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Centre for Human Rights
Faculty of Law

PRESS STATEMENT

CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS URGES ANGOLA TO IMMEDIATELY AND IMPARTIALLY INVESTIGATE UNLAWFUL KILLING OF 14-YEAR OLD RUFINO ANTONIO

18 August 2016

The Centre for Human Rights (CHR), Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria, is saddened by the fatal shooting of 14-year old Rufino Antonio by members of the Angolan military police during a peaceful protest in Luanda on 6 August 2016.

The peaceful protests, organised by local residents against planned demolition for commercial and industrial purposes by the Luanda-Bengo Special Economic Zone, turned violent when members of the military police opened fire on unarmed peaceful protesters, killing the young Rufino.

The deployment of military police for the purpose of peaceful protests brings to light not only the continued and ongoing systematic failure of Angolan state institutions to deal with legitimate human rights concerns, but also the unnecessary and inappropriate use of force by security services. Recently, security services have brutally clamped down on peaceful gatherings. Many are arrested and detained for gathering in public places without the consent of the provincial government.

Despite the 2010 Angolan Constitution protecting the freedom of expression and speech in article 40 and freedom of assembly of persons in article 47, security forces have been known to impede such action before they even start, and in the process violating the law. Angola is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and other international and regional instruments. Angola is therefore bound by both international and national law to respect the right of persons to exercise their right to peaceful protests.

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The unprecedented level of protest action in Angola precipitated by the crash in the oil markets brings to the surface wider concerns of the general human right conditions in that country.

In light of this event, the Centre for Human Rights urges Angola:

- To comply with its international human rights obligations.
- Immediately and impartially investigate and punish those responsible.
- Work towards creating spaces for the free exchange of ideas, without fear.
- Uphold commitment to the values and fundamental principles of a democratic state based on the rule of law, pluralism of political expression and organisation as enshrined within the 2010 Angolan Constitution.

The Centre also calls upon the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to play a more active role in ensuring Angola abides with its obligations under the African Charter, and to include issues raised here in its scheduled mission to Angola.

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