

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

AI Index: AFR 12/008/2003 (Public)
News Service No: 253

Embargo Date: 12 November 2003 00:01 GMT

Angola: Forced evictions violate basic human rights

Published

The Government of Angola must put an end to mass forced evictions, Amnesty International said in a new report entitled *Angola: Mass forced evictions in Luanda - a call for a human rights-based housing policy*.

People in over 5,000 households were evicted and their homes were demolished in three mass evictions between 2001 and 2003.

"The evictions, in the Boavista, Soba Kapassa and Benfica areas in Luanda, were arbitrary, and carried out at police gun-point without adequate prior notice or consultation," Amnesty International said.

Forced evictions - a term used internationally to describe evictions carried out without due process - violate human rights. They violate Angola's obligations under international human rights treaties to which it is a party. Forced evictions undermine the right to adequate housing and subject people to arbitrary or unlawful interference with their privacy, family or home.

During the first week of evictions in Boavista, two people were killed and many others injured after police opened fire. Residents reported that, during these evictions, some of them were beaten by members of the provincial government's eviction and demolition squad. Incidents of beating were also reported in Benfica and Soba Kapassa.

Thousands of people who were evicted from Boavista in 2001 lived in weather-beaten tents until about half were re-housed in mid 2003. Most Benfica evictees were re-housed, but they suffered loss of employment or schooling. Former Soba Kapassa residents received no compensation at all.

The report examines the evictions in Luanda and discusses current Angolan law in the light of international human rights standards on the right to adequate housing and the right not to be forcibly evicted. It also suggests strategies for enhancing protection against forced evictions and for taking steps to fulfill ensuring the right to adequate housing.

Amnesty International is aware of the Angolan government's efforts to address the needs

of millions of city dwellers living in unplanned settlements without adequate access to such utilities as clean drinking water, sanitation, electricity, schools and clinics. However, forced evictions for the purpose of making land available for development or for any other purpose is not a solution to the problem.

"The Angolan government should place an immediate moratorium on mass evictions until such time as a comprehensive human rights-based housing policy and a legal framework providing effective legal remedies have been adopted," Amnesty International said.

It is crucial that new policies and laws accord fully with international human rights standards. As a basic protection against forced eviction, the government should take immediate steps to confer legal security of tenure on people who lack such protection and, as soon as possible, to develop legislation to prevent forced eviction.

The law should ensure that in cases where evictions are necessary, they should be carried out with full legal and other protection and due process. The state should provide alternative accommodation for those who are unable to provide for themselves.

For the full report in English, please go to:

<http://www.web.amnesty.org/library/index/engaf1200703>

For the Portuguese version of the report, please go to:

[http://web.amnesty.org/aidoc/aidoc_pdf.nsf/Index/AFR120072003PORTUGUESE/\\$File/AFR1200703.pdf](http://web.amnesty.org/aidoc/aidoc_pdf.nsf/Index/AFR120072003PORTUGUESE/$File/AFR1200703.pdf)

Public Document

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566
Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

For latest human rights news view <http://news.amnesty.org>