

Angolan journalist sentenced for airing police station screams

An Angolan court handed an opposition journalist a fine and suspended six-month prison sentence Friday after he broadcast screams coming from a police station live over the radio station for which he works.



The journalist heard screams coming from a police station, aired them on his radio station - and was charged and convicted of a crime. (Image: Wikimedia Commons)

Queiros Anastacio Chiluvia, the managing editor of opposition-funded Radio Despertar, was convicted of libel, slander, contempt of law enforcement and illegal media practice, according to his lawyer Africano Cangombe.

The 37-year-old journalist was arrested Sunday when he broadcast live detainees' cries for help coming from inside a police station that he had heard from the road.

"He hasn't committed any crime, only exercised his journalistic profession," said Cangombe, slamming the "unfair verdict".

"The detainees called for help because one of them who had tuberculosis was seriously ill because of overpopulation and poor conditions in their prison cell," he told AFP, adding that the inmate later died in hospital.

Other sources earlier said Chiluvia was arrested when he confronted police about the cries.

He was released on a \$2,000 fine on Friday, five days after he was detained without charge, but will appeal the sentence.

The radio station is funded by the main opposition party, Unita, which fought a bitter civil war against the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola government until a peace accord in 2002.

Substantial oil reserves have fuelled an economic boom over the past decade, but most Angolans still live in abject poverty.

International rights groups regularly denounce abuses and restrictions of freedom of speech by the government of President Jose Eduardo dos Santos, who has ruled the country for 34 years.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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