

Angolan journalist charged with defamation

Angola's attorney-general should immediately drop all criminal defamation charges against an investigative journalist, Rafael Marques de Morais, because they undermine free expression rights, Human Rights Watch said on 12 August 2013. The Angolan government should repeal the country's criminal defamation laws - the basis for the charges.

The 11 lawsuits brought against Marques - Angola's most prominent investigative journalist, human rights defender, and anti-corruption campaigner - are the latest attempt by Angolan officials to silence his reporting, Human Rights Watch said. Marques has exposed a range of high-level corruption cases and human rights violations in his blog, and pursued sensitive investigations into human rights violations in Angola's diamond areas.

"Angola has found its criminal defamation laws very useful to try to squelch reports about corruption and human rights violations," said Leslie Lefkow, deputy Africa director at Human Rights Watch. "Angola should be investigating these reports of serious human rights violations instead of trying to silence the bearers of bad news."

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