



CENTRE ON  
HOUSING RIGHTS  
AND EVICTIONS



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His Excellency  
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C/c:

Presidency of the Republic  
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Presidency of the National Assembly  
Angola

UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to  
Adequate Housing

President of the African Commission for Human  
and Peoples' Rights

25 March 2010

**Re: Forced eviction of more than three thousand families in Lubango – seven or more deaths to be confirmed – and other violent and illegal evictions and demolitions in Angola**

Excellency,

The Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) is an international human rights non-governmental organisation based in Geneva Switzerland. COHRE has consultative status with the United Nations and the Council of Europe and works to promote and protect the right to adequate housing for everyone, everywhere, including preventing or remedying forced evictions. In partnership with international civil society organization Christian Aid and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) want to call your attention to the following:

COHRE, Christian Aid and OMCT and our Angolan partners are gravely concerned about the reported forced eviction of more than three thousand families and demolition of houses in Lubango city, Huíla province, since beginning of March 2010. 7 deaths were reported during the demolition of houses. Many evicted families and their belongings were left in the open-air where bad weather is damaging their property; and / or several families are sharing a tent.

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There is no water, sanitation, food, medical facilities, and schools, giving rise to a humanitarian emergency. At night the evicted are robbed by bandits due to lack of police protection. According to citizens affected by the eviction they will not receive any compensation from the government for damages caused or assisted with building materials for reconstruction. During the eviction process, His Excellency the provincial Governor of Huila interfered with the media, forbidding them to cover and report the eviction events.

There are also registered or threatened violent and illegal evictions of other citizens in Benguela, in Luanda, as well as in other poor urban neighbourhoods and many rural communities in Angola. Indeed, COHRE, Christian Aid and OMCT and our Angolan partners' organizations are concerned with the housing, land and human rights situation in Angola. In the February 2010 Angola UPR review one of the recommendation given was on the state of Angola to increase housing to low-income families and create laws defining eviction and prevention of illegal evictions.

The international community has indicated forced evictions as a gross violation of human rights, particularly affecting the right to adequate housing.<sup>1</sup> In its General Comment No. 4, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states that “the instances of forced eviction are *prima facie* incompatible with the requirements of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).<sup>2</sup> COHRE, Christian Aid and OMCT remind the provincial Government of Huila, the Administration of Lubango and all relevant authorities in Angola that as a State Party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, it is bound to comply with the State Party obligations contained within this international treaty, including the obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the right to adequate housing enshrined in Article 11.

COHRE, Christian Aid and OMCT would like to remind the Angolan authorities that in terms of international human rights law, for evictions to be considered as lawful, they must satisfy legal requirements as articulated in General Comments numbers 4 and 7 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Evictions should not result in rendering individuals homeless or vulnerable to the violation of other human rights. Where those affected are unable to provide for themselves, Angola government must take all appropriate measures, to the maximum of its available resources, to ensure that adequate alternative housing, resettlement or access to alternative land able to support the community livelihood, as the case may be is available.<sup>3</sup>

In this case, not only has the eviction process not been followed, but *a human-made emergency was created*. The state of Angola must cease immediately the illegal demolitions in the city of Lubango and other threatened evictions in other towns or rural areas in Angola.

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<sup>1</sup> Commission on Human Rights, resolutions 1993/77 and 2004/24.

<sup>2</sup> Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment 4, The right to adequate housing, para. 18, (Sixth session, 1991), U.N. Doc. E/1992/23, annex III at 114 (1991), reprinted in Compilation of General Comments and General Recommendations Adopted by Human Rights Treaty Bodies, U.N. Doc. HRI/GEN/1/Rev.6 at 18 (2003).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at para. 17.

State authorities need to provide housing, food water and sanitation facilities for the evicted families as dialogue platforms are made available with Angola civil society organisations and community groups, on compensation and other ways of enabling the families to restart their lives in environment they feel comfortable with.

The State of Angola must ensure that further forced evictions will stop until basic standards, legislation and rules on carrying out an eviction can be put into practice in all the territory and protection is ensured to all Angolan Citizens.

Requests for further information or electronic replies should be sent to [salih@cohre.org](mailto:salih@cohre.org).

Sincerely,

Salih Booker  
Executive Director  
Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions

Paul Valentin  
Director, International Department  
Christian Aid

Eric Sottas  
Secretary General  
World Organisation Against Torture