

Minister of Justice and Human Rights
Marcy Cláudio Lopes
Casarão da Justiça, Rua 17 de Setembro
Gombota, Luanda, LU, Angola
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Dear Minister Marcy Lopes,

I am writing to express concern for the safety of members of the National Union of Higher Education Teachers (SINPES), including its secretary general, Eduardo Peres Alberto and his daughter, Maria Peres Alberto.

On 27 February, the SINPES started a strike to demand better work conditions and fulfilment of promises made by the government to them in 2021. On 28 March, Eduardo Peres Alberto received a text message - "You're going too far with the strike, then don't say you weren't warned." On the same day, his eldest daughter, Maria Peres Alberto, received a message warning her to "Tell [her] father to stop the strike otherwise we will attack". The next day, she received another message demanding she explain to her father and the union that "if he doesn't stop the strike, we will attack". After that, the same numbers sent other messages also promising to kill other union leaders of the strike. On 3 April, an envelope was left at Eduardo Peres Alberto's house in Luanda, Angola's capital, containing a photo of Maria Peres Alberto with a black cross. A week later, on 10 April, unidentified men broke the window of Eduardo Peres Alberto's house and sent a message to his daughter: "Did you see the scare? Next time we will kill." SINPES' secretary for information reported that he saw unidentified men surrounding his house for two days; on 1 May they unsuccessfully attempted to break into the house. The break-ins and all the threats were reported to the police, however, to date, no investigation has been launched, nor measures put in place to protect the union leaders, members and their relatives. On 25 April, Maria Peres Alberto was attacked in the street close to her home by unidentified individuals, who threw a toxic chemical cannister at her which caused serious health complications, forcing her to be hospitalized for about 17 days. On 11 May, while in hospital, she received a text message from an unknown number stating that they knew where she was being hospitalized. Concerned about her safety and security, the doctors recommended that she continue her treatment at home.

Under international law and Article 51 of its Constitution, Angola has an obligation to respect, protect, promote, and fulfil the human rights of everyone including workers and to ensure that they realize their rights to unionize and strike without fear of harm and reprisals.

I urge you to carry out an effective investigation into the attack against Maria Peres Alberto and the death threats against her, Eduardo Peres Alberto, and other SINPES leaders, ensuring the suspected perpetrators are brought to justice in fair trials. I further urge you to immediately take all necessary steps to guarantee the protection and safety of all SINPES leaders and their families.

Yours sincerely,