

Statement on the draft law on Status of non-governmental organisations in Angola

5 July 2023

We express our deep concerns on the risks posed by a new draft law regulating civil society in Angola, urging international organizations, governments, and other stakeholders to join us in support of the fundamental freedoms and constitutional rights of the Angolan people by demanding from the Angolan authorities to withdraw the law in its current form.

The draft law “Estatuto das Organizações Não-Governamentais” (Status of non-governmental organisations), was approved in general terms by the Angolan National Assembly in May 2023. The law is currently undergoing revision by a special committee before being reapproved by the Parliament and subsequently sent to the President for final sign off. Should this happen, NGOs in Angola would no longer have the right to operate freely, independently, and safely, and their voices ensuring transparency and accountability of government action will be silenced.

It is not the first time that the Angolan political regime has attacked national and international civil society organizations operating in the country. In March 2015, former President José Eduardo dos Santos issued a Decree regulating the action of civil society organizations which was challenged and found illegal by the Constitutional Court of Angola. Since the lead-up to the national elections in 2022, Angola has witnessed a further increase in restrictions on the work of civil society organizations. These restrictions impede the right to peaceful assembly and have led to the arbitrary arrest of citizens expressing dissenting views. The introduction of the draft law comes therefore in, and will exacerbate, an already restrictive environment for civil society in the country.

Equally as concerning is that the new legislative initiative led by President João Lourenço is being introduced under the pretext of enhancing compliance with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Recommendations, addressing risks related to terrorism and money laundering.

That a key measure against transnational corruption such as FATF is being misused by one of the countries in the world mostly affected by illicit financial flows to seriously jeopardize the freedom and autonomy of civil society organizations undermines Angola’s commitment to addressing illicit financial flows. It is many of these civil society organizations the law would impact that have proved to be central for advancing the fight against corruption, the defence of human rights and sustainable development in Angola.

Among the most concerning provisions of the law are:

- the establishment of a new civil society organizations supervisory body dependent on the government that will be responsible for monitoring, supervising, and, most worryingly, dissolving these organizations without recourse to judicial proceedings;
- the imposition of onerous registration, inspection and monitoring requirements, mandating civil society organizations to disclose their sources of funding to this government body;
- funding restrictions from organizations or individuals *"involved in activities that call into question constitutionally enshrined interests"*. This vague definition may impede collaboration with international organizations and partners;
- the prohibition of engagement in *"subversive acts or acts that could be perceived as such"*, posing a serious threat to freedom of expression and assembly for civil society.

Furthermore, the law was drafted and introduced in Parliament without consultation or prior notice to relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations.

The restrictive measures outlined in the draft law contradict Angola's commitments under international law to uphold freedom of expression and assembly, principles that are also enshrined in the Angolan Constitution.

We express our strong solidarity with Angolan civil society organizations in their fight for freedom, justice and independence.

Signatories of statement

- Access Info Europe, Spain
- Access to Information in Namibia (ACTION) Coalition, Namibia
- Action Jeunesse pour le Développement, Congo Brazzaville
- Africa Centre for Open Governance (AfricOG), Kenya
- AGOPA-DH Agence pour la Gouvernance Participative et Droits Humains, DRC
- Albanian Center for Economic Research (ACER), Albania
- AMAN Coalition (TI Palestine), Palestine
- Amnistia Internacional - Portugal, Portugal
- ANEEJ, Nigeria
- Anti-corruption Action Centre, Ukraine
- Anti-Corruption Trust of Southern Africa, Zimbabwe
- Associação Moçambicana para Cidadania Activa -AMOCA, Mozambique
- Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication, Bangladesh
- Belize PEACE Movement, Belize

- **Botswana Watch Organisation**, Botswana
- **Breaking the Wall of Silence (BWS)**, Namibia
- **Centre for Law and Democracy**, Canada
- **Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI)**, Pakistan
- **Centro de Integridade Pública de Moçambique (CIP)**, Mozambique
- **CiFAR - Civil Forum for Asset Recovery**, Germany
- **CISE Malawi**, Malawi
- **CISLAC/TI Nigeria**, Nigeria
- **Civic Alliance**, Montenegro
- **Civil Society Information Centre (CIVIC +264)**, Namibia
- **Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development (CCGD) and EACSOFF-Kenya Chapter (hosted by CCGD)**, Kenya
- **Constitution and Reform Education Consortium (CRECO)**, Kenya
- **Construisions Ensemble le Monde**, DRC
- **CONSUBAL**, Spain
- **Coordinating Assembly of NGOs**, Eswatini
- **Corruption Watch (TI South Africa)**, South Africa
- **Derechos Humanos y Litigio Estratégico Mexicano, AC (DLM)**, Mexico
- **Economic and Social Justice Trust**, Namibia
- **EG Justice**, Equatorial Guinea
- **Forum Civil (TI Senegal)**, Senegal
- **Freedom for Eurasia**, Kyrgyzstan
- **Fundación Nacional para el Desarrollo (TI El Salvador)**, El Salvador
- **Gambia Participates**, Gambia
- **Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition**, Ghana
- **I Watch Organisation**, Tunisia
- **IDDECO Costa Rica**, Costa Rica
- **Improve your Society Organization**, Yemen
- **Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)**, Georgia
- **Institute for Public Policy Research**, Namibia
- **Institute for Social Accountability (TISA)**, Kenya
- **Integrity Initiatives International**, International - registered in the US
- **Kosovo Law Institute**, Kosovo
- **Legal Assistance Centre (LAC)**, Namibia
- **LICOCO - Ligue Congolaise de Lutte Contre la Corruption**, DRC
- **Lifeline/Childline**, Namibia
- **Mexiro AC**, Mexico
- **Namibia Development Trust (NDT)**, Namibia
- **Namibia Diverse Women's Association (NDWA)**, Namibia
- **Namibia Media Trust (NMT)**, Namibia
- **Namibia Institute for Democracy (NID)**, Namibia
- **Namibia Network of AIDS Service Organisations (NANASO)**, Namibia
- **New Apostolic Centre for Development (NCD)**, Nigeria
- **Niger Human Right Defenders Network**, Niger
- **Organisation Tchadienne Anti-corruption (OTAC)**, Tchad
- **Oživení, z.s.**, Czech Republic
- **Plataforma de Reflexão Angola**, Portugal
- **Plataforma Portuguesa das ONGD**, Portugal
- **PPLAAF**, France
- **Public-Private Integrity**, Gambia
- **Romanian Academic Society**, Romania
- **Rural People's Institute for Social Empowerment (RISE)**, Namibia
- **Shout-Out Against Gender Based Violence**, Namibia
- **Southern African Children Initiative**, Namibia
- **Stefan Batory Foundation**, Poland
- **Syri i Vizionit**, Kosovo
- **The Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation (TI Malta contact point)**, Malta
- **Transparency International Brazil**, Brazil
- **Transparência Internacional Portugal**, Portugal
- **Transparencia por Colombia**, Colombia
- **Transparencia Venezuela**, Venezuela
- **Transparency International - Czech Republic**, Czech Republic
- **Transparency International - Initiative Madagascar**, Madagascar
- **Transparency International - Macedonia**, North Macedonia
- **Transparency International Anticorruption Center (TIAC)**, Armenia
- **Transparency International Bangladesh**, Bangladesh
- **Transparency International Denmark**, Denmark

- **Transparency International France**, France
- **Transparency International Georgia**, Georgia
- **Transparency International Germany**, Germany
- **Transparency International Hungary**, Hungary
- **Transparency International Iceland**, Iceland
- **Transparency International Ireland**, Ireland
- **Transparency International Israel**, Israel
- **Transparency International Kenya**, Kenya
- **Transparency International Malaysia**, Malaysia
- **Transparency International Turkey**, Turkey
- **Transparency International U.S.**, USA
- **Transparency International UK**, United Kingdom
- **Transparency International Zambia**, Zambia
- **Transparency International Zimbabwe**, Zimbabwe
- **Transparency Mauritius**, Mauritius
- **Transparency Morocco**, Morocco
- **Veille Citoyenne Togo**, Togo
- **Vouliwatch**, Greece
- **Young Feminists Movement Namibia (Y-Fem)**, Namibia
- **Zambia Council for Social Development (ZCSD)**, Zambia
- **Zimbabwe Women Against Corruption Trust**, Zimbabwe